Coalition *for the* Delaware River Watershed

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Toolkit
Volume 2: External Engagement Practices

Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed

Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed

Introduction

The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW) protects and restores the land and waters in the Delaware River Basin. We amplify the collective power of 160+ member organizations and other stakeholders as we advocate for a healthy and protected watershed with an inclusive, unified voice. The Coalition is dedicated to advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) within our network structure, partnerships, processes, and policy goals to ensure that all communities share equitably in the benefits of clean water, and public access. We recognize that environmental injustices target marginalized communities and historically, minorities have faced barriers in joining the mainstream environmental movement. The Coalition will work to comprehensively represent the Delaware River watershed's population by amplifying the voices of unheard communities to build a healthy and equitable watershed for generations to come.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide resources that empower our members and partners to take mindful action to break down the barriers that hinder participation in the environmental and conservation sector. Together, we will work toward implementing and encouraging inclusive practices where every voice is heard and valued, across race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, geography, educational background, religion, ability, veteran status, and political philosophy.

This toolkit is a sequel to the Coalition's first DEIJ Toolkit, Volume 1: Internal Organizational Practices. The first volume focused on DEIJ Internally, within an organization's culture. Volume 1 contains resources explaining the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, governance, promoting DEIJ in the workplace, fostering inclusive organizational cultures, and recruitment and retention, among other topics. This volume will focus on external engagement practices. **We highly recommend starting with the first volume, particularly if your organization is in the early stages of embedding DEIJ into its mission, structure, and culture.** By having a strong equitable and inclusive culture within an organization, external engagement strategies will be more effective and genuine.

In this toolkit, recommendations will often be directed towards staff, though this is meant in a broad sense. Especially with externally focused work, there are many organizations that utilize dedicated volunteers in their programmatic offerings for the public. Even for volunteers that occasionally interact with your organization, it is important for your organization to be explicit in the values and practices rooted in DEIJ and what implications they hold for how you expect volunteers to interact with others as representatives of your organization. While it may not be possible to hold trainings for every volunteer that is associated with your organization, having core volunteers and staff receive training and model expected behavior can go a long way in creating an inclusive environment, even for those who did not receive the training. DEIJ values can be explained during a volunteer onboarding process, meetings for specific events, or many other touchpoints that volunteers have with staff.

Please note that the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, as so many organizations throughout the watershed, is taking this critical work seriously and aims to integrate every aspect internally, but this is an ongoing process for us, and a learning curve exists. Incorporating DEIJ values within an organization is based upon continuous learning, and to reflect that, this toolkit will be a living document to be updated as we gain more resources and experience in this work. In pursuing this work organizations must be prepared to be uncomfortable and make mistakes. Waiting until an organization feels as though it will do everything perfectly is a sure way to never start at all. Instead, organizations must rise to the challenge of reflecting upon missteps, learning to ask questions, and evaluate previously held assumptions, all of which are parts of developing a growth mindset.

We would like to thank everyone who worked to create this toolkit, including CDRW's DEIJ Workgroup, Steering Committee, National Wildlife Federation's Equity and Justice Workgroup, and Resource Media.

Mapping for Engagement

When re-evaluating your organization's external engagement strategy in order to incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, mapping exercises can be critical tools for reflecting on past accomplishments and determining areas of new engagement opportunities. Even without sophisticated mapping software, simply adding pins to a physical map of your region representing different factors can be a valuable visualization tool in determining proper next steps when looking to engage new or re-engage specific communities.

A map (or series of maps) can be created to give a broad understanding of your region, its history, the communities represented both historically and presently, and historical and present environmental work. These general maps can include watershed boundaries, historical and present day Indigenous lands, natural resource centers (i.e. fisheries), historical and culturally relevant areas, land use, past or present environmental justice issues or areas, historically redlined neighborhoods, or demographics such as income, race or ethnicity, children, and seniors. Many of these data sets are readily available online, such as the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (uses 15 U.S. census variables to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters) or the University of Richmond's Redlining in New Deal America Map. Esri's Racial Equity GIS Hub includes data layers, maps, applications, training resources, articles on best practices, solutions, and examples of how Esri users from around the world are leveraging GIS to address racial inequities.

Aggregated environmental and social data, such as pollution indicators or racial and enthic demographics can provide insight as to what communities in your region are facing, especially for vulnerable populations. In the United States there is an unequal geographic distribution of pollution sources, such as industrial facilities, legacy contamination, or lead water service lines. The authors of "Toxic Waste and Race at Twenty, 1987-2007: A Report Prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries'' found that African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans were 1.7, 2.3, and 1.8 times more likely than whites to live within 3 kilometers of commercial hazardous waste facilities across the entire country.[1] 21 million people, or 6% of the U.S population, live within one mile of a Superfund site. This group has a higher proportion of racial minorities, households below the poverty level, the linguistically isolated, and people with less than a High School education than compared to the demographics of the population as a whole.[2]

EPA's EJScreen Mapper is a great resource that has already collected demographic and environmental data that can be used in this work. The EJ Indexes, as well as the 11 environmental and 6 demographic indicators are available to the public, and can be downloaded. You can select specific regions with this tool to get synopsis on a particular area in the United States through an EJ lens. If you are new to EJ Screen you can visit here to learn more.

Each state in the basin also offers their own online maps that allow for overlays with provided data.

- NY- Interactive Maps include DECinfo Locator, Harmful Algal Blooms, Environmental Resource, Stormwater
- PA- Environmental Justice Area Viewer
- NJ- NJMap2, NJGeoWeb
- DE- Delaware Environmental Navigator

[1] Proximity to Environmental Hazards: Environmental Justice and Adverse Health Outcomes, Juliana Maantay, Jayajit Chakraborty, Jean Brender

[2] Population Surrounding 1,857 Superfund Remedial Sites, Environmental Protection Agency

You may take the time to map out what projects, press conferences, restoration and stewardship work, outreach initiatives, or investments your organization has held in the past, and overlay that with demographic data to ascertain what populations have benefited most from your work, and which have been left out. While these can just be a geographic indicator of where these projects have occurred, you can also use different sized symbols to indicate which projects you think have had the largest impact on the community or your organization.

Maps can also be used to evaluate your current partners, again using differently sized or colored symbols to indicate the strength of these partnerships. Rather than a geographic map, a bubble map can be used to show factors such as relationships that partnering organizations also have with one another, perceived power imbalances, relationships you are trying to build upon, and more.

After analyzing these maps, take time to reflect upon what the maps indicate about the work your organization has done in the past. Does your geographic footprint of projects tend to center around specific demographic indicators? Are you partnering with organizations that largely look like your own? Does your work as it currently stands demonstrate your organization's commitment to increasing DEIJ?[3,4]

After you have done some work engaging a specific community, take the maps that you created to them along with the analysis and assumptions that you made about their findings. The community may share that there are aspects your organization overlooked in this initial phase, or may come to different conclusions based on the data.

These mapping exercises, or a similar reflective activity, are critical to understanding where your organization has flourished, and what communities have been left out. When starting to engage new communities there may be a knee-jerk reaction to reach out to as many as possible along many different aspects of diversity. This reaction is misguided, as staff capacity and knowledge must be taken into account. In order for relationships with communities to be authentic, time has to be invested and your organization's processes may need to be adjusted. Use these exercises to provide guidelines as to which community or communities you will prioritize in outreach. You may also consider what existing relationships can be leveraged, any specific opportunities that are coming up (i.e. grant-funded work), or areas with inequitable distribution of environmental benefits.

Principles of Community Engagement

Many environmental organizations understand the importance of effective community engagement and the critical role it plays in carrying out their missions. As these organizations gain awareness of environmental inequalities in their regions, a clear first step is engaging with the communities that have been harmed by these injustices in order to rectify historical and present-day issues.

Before engaging a new community, your staff must be set up for success. Take time to evaluate your organization's current capacity including: budget, staff time, existing relationships and training needs. You will also need to look at your staff capacity to determine which communities to engage. Be realistic about what your staff can take on. Set reasonable goals and communicate them to the community. Don't over-promise and risk letting down the community with expectations your organization cannot meet. When goal-setting for community engagement, focus on relationship building with both community leaders and constituents. This process will take time. Concentrating on deliverables like implementation of programs or engagement targets can rush the relationship-building stage, and make the collaborative work less authentic. When relationship-building is prioritized, the community you are working to engage can share their own needs, rather than your organization coming in and offering what is best for you rather than the community.[5]

[3] DEIJ In Action: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
[4] Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide, Seattle Office for Civil Rights
[5] DEIJ In Action: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The starting stages of relationship building can include attending community events, municipal meetings, local non-profit meetings, or community based conferences. Consider having one on one meetings with community leaders to introduce yourself prior to attending community meetings, where you may be perceived as a stranger without the introductory meeting. Use these events to gain knowledge on your own, keeping a record of commonly voiced issues and solutions that the community is working on. Continue this during and after the project. If your organization is only engaging the community when it is convenient for you, it will message that the engagement is inauthentic and one-sided. Support and interact with the community on an ongoing basis to continue to build relationships and trust. If you worry that your staff does not have the capacity for this sustained involvement, it is best to wait to engage the community until you can commit to this. Relationship building, especially with a new community, is a lengthy process; it is better to budget more time and resources than you would expect in order to ensure that an authentic commitment can be made.

It is likely that the community you are engaging will recommend changes to how your organization functions, (i.e. holding meetings after working hours), and it is important to be open to these suggestions in order to be responsive to the community's insight to encourage shared power.[6]

The following sections outline best practices for community engagement for underserved communities that your organization is new to working with. These methods can also be implemented for more equitable engagement with current partners.

Power Dynamics: From Engagement to Ownership

There are many aspects of power that often go unspoken, especially for advocacy-focused non-profits. To ensure equitable relationships, it is important to first verbalize and acknowledge these different types of power and the ways they manifest in our work.

The traditional way of understanding power is in terms of "power-over". This frames power as a win-lose relationship, in that, if one group gains power it is taking it from others, and power is wielded to dominate and prevent others from gaining it for themselves. In direct contrast to that framework, "power-with" comes from finding common ground and building collective strength,and puts emphasis on interdependence and collective action. Power-with shifts and expands power from benefiting the few at the top to benefiting large constituencies.

In both systems of power-over and power-with, there are varying levels of visibility. Visible power, often in the form of direct political involvement, encompasses the formation of rules, structures, authorities, institutions, and procedures of decision making. Visible power is seen from elections to corporate policies. Most advocacy-focused groups concentrate their work in this space of visible power. While it is integral to do so, only focusing on this aspect can become a hindrance when groups are only focusing on the current legislative session or the current election. This also negatively impacts groups that have traditionally not held power (i.e. Black, Indigenous, People of Color), even when decisions are being made about their communities.

Hidden power, or organizational infrastructure, comes into play when the political agenda is being set. Powerful individuals or institutions utilize this power to control who is at the decision-making table, and what gets included in the agenda. This can be built on both formal and informal networks. Like visible power, traditionally precluded groups oftentimes cannot participate due to the historical legacy of how this power has been built. This sentiment is echoed in phrases such as "nothing about us without us", or "getting a seat at the table".

[6] Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide, Seattle Office for Civil Rights

The last, and most nebulous face of power, is invisible power. This is based on the dominant ideology and worldview, which in turn provides context for what issues are deemed important, and what strategies should be used to address them. Invisible power goes a step further by denying that change is possible, or denying that those affected by issues are agents of change themselves. This leads to non-action, and non-participation, especially amongst oppressed groups feeling the weight of the messaged powerlessness. [7][8]These dimensions of power can be viewed both on the micro and macro levels. The below chart (Transcribed from Dynamics of Power, Inclusion, and Exclusion) outlines how visible, hidden, and invisible power can play out on the micro and macro scale.

	Micro power **(Power dynamics that take place within an individual, organization, and community)**	**Macro Power** **(Power Dynamics that shape national and international arenas and broader public spaces.**
Visible Observable Decision Making	What does representation look like within our organizations and their strategies? Who is speaking for whom, and what are class, race, gender, and other differences? Who are the leaders, and are there opportunities for new leadership? What are the coalition's dynamics? How are decisions made? How is conflict managed?	What does representation look like in formal political spaces, international financial institutions, etc.? How are public policy decisions made? Who is included, and who is not in the process? How do decision makers interact (or not) with citizens?
Hidden Setting the Political Agenda	Within family/community/organizations/ movements, what agendas dominate? Are gender, class, ethnicity, and other dimensions integrated into justice strategies? How is information gathered and used? To what extent is practical knowledge valued alongside technical experience?	What institutions and/or individuals have access to the decision-making process, and how is this access determined? How do civil society groups project their agenda and get their issues on decision-makers' agendas? How are spaces created to negotiate with decision-makers? How is information used and produced?
Invisible Shaping Meaning	How are internalized social (race/gender/ ethnic/class/etc.) roles and stereotypes played out in family, work, and community? Do people this that they are too "stupid" to understand the problems that affect them? Do they think they have no role and no right in changing their situation and that they're to blame?	Is there systematic discrimination/exclusion on the basis of race, class, gender, age, etc.? How are problems "sold" to the public: as natural or inevitable? Are people made to feel that they have any role in the solution? What is the paradigm of development that underlies decision-making?

[7] Dynamics of Power, Inclusion, and Exclusion Lisa VeneKlasen with Valier Miller, Just Associates, Nonprofit Online News Journal
[8] Power and Social Change Grassroots Policy Project

For activities that your staff/volunteers/board can do to learn more about the dynamics of power, visit Power and Social Change.

Taking the above power dynamics into account is especially important when engaging traditionally marginalized communities. The below chart (transcribed from From Community Engagement to Ownership) outlines their spectrum of engagement, from "Ignoring" to "Deferring to". Note how, as the chart progresses from left to right, power-over is being transformed into power-with.

Stance Towards Community	**0 Ignore**	**1 Inform**	**2 Consult**	**3 Involve**	**4 Collaborate**	**5 Defer to**
Impact	Marginalization	Placation	Tokenization	Voice	Delegated Power	Community Ownership
Community Engagement Goals	Deny access to decision making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process and inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementing decisions	Foster democratic participation and equity by placing full decision making in the hands of the community; bridge divide between community and governance
Message to Community	"Your voice, needs, and interests do not matter"	"We will keep you informed"	"We care about what you think"	"You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about an issue	"Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue"	"It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions"
Activities	Closed door meetings, misinformation, systematic disenfranchisement, voter suppression	Fact Sheets, Open Houses, Presentations, Billboards, Videos	Public Comments, Focus Groups, Community Forums, Surveys	Community organizing and advocacy, house meetings, interactive workshops, polling, community forums	MOUs with Community-based Organizations, Community Organizing, Citizen Advisory Councils, Open planning forums with citizen planning	Community driven planning, Consensus-building, participatory action research, participatory budgeting, cooperatives

Take time to evaluate where your organization stands with its current methodology for community engagement. Is your community engagement less "engaging" and more "informative"? Each of these steps along the continuum is important in building capacity for community collaboration. If your organization is currently at a 2 (Consulting), then leaping directly to a 5 (Deferring) would be misguided. Communities most impacted by structural inequalities tend to be under-resourced and often have a range of complex issues. Without the capacity to organize, informing and consulting coming from your organization could veer into the territory of tokenization or placation, meaning that including the community is only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to give the appearance of equality while in reality continuing to promote the power imbalance. Each step along this continuum allows organizations to assist in capacity-building for the community, with the end goal of community-based empowerment.[9]

Power and privilege often go hand in hand. The United States is a white-dominant/white-supremacy culture, meaning that the prioritizing of white culture is used to oppress the culture of BIPOC to establish, defend, and maintain a system of both power and privilege.[10] This is seen in standards of professionalism; Western standards of dress and hairstyles being the norm for offices, attitudes on timeliness or work style, preference for certain types of communication.[11] Think how white privilege is leveraged to get the attention of decision makers, or how a well funded organization has the power to enact plans that a low-income community disagrees with. When navigating power dynamics both within your organization and with partners it is critical to include the lens of privilege in the analysis.

Identifying Community Leaders

When beginning to engage with a new community, especially one that has not historically been included in the mainstream environmental movement, identifying community leaders is a critical first step. Gaining the trust of a community can take a significant amount of time, and even more so if your organization missteps in ways that would have been prevented by creating a dialogue with leaders to truly understand the attitudes, needs, and stakeholders of their community.

Rather than starting from scratch when identifying a community leader, try to consult with other organizations or agencies that have already worked successfully with the community. These organizations can be other environmentally-focused organizations- such as Environmental Commissions, county extension services, farmer cooperatives, or they can have a broader focus- like churches, libraries, public health departments, recreation departments, or general community-focused nonprofits. These organizations may be community leaders themselves, or they can point you to individuals that are.

There are a handful of different methods to identify community leaders. Many of these can be done in tandem, and if the same names keep coming up then you can be sure you have identified a community leader.

Position Method- This method identifies people who are in positions of authority, such as mayors, commission members, school board representatives, etc. This method is the most straight-forward, as many of these names can be gathered by a simple internet search. Be aware that many community leaders are informal leaders, and only pursuing this method can leave them out. Depending on the community, those who have positions of authority may not be representative of the community as a whole (i.e. a predominantly Latinx community with a predominantly white municipal staff).

Reputation Method- This method identifies members of the community that have their community's respect. This can be ascertained by asking members of the community to list the three most respected people in their community, and looking for repeatedly reported names. Asking someone from a majority group to identify a minority leader is not ideal, it is better to ask those with the identities of the community group you are trying to engage for their feedback.

---

[9] From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Case Studies of Four Municipal Community-Driven Environmental & Racial Equity Committees Facilitating Power, Movement Strategy Center, National Association of Climate Resilience Planners, Urban Sustainability Directors Network

[10] Race, Resilience, Social Location PowerPoint

[11] The Bias of 'Professionalism' Standards, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Aysa Gray

Event Analysis Method- This method looks to identify active members of the community by analyzing their participation in community events. As you attend community meetings and events, do you see some of the same faces again and again? If so, these people are good candidates to be community leaders.
Social Participation Method- This method finds people who occupy positions of authority in multiple organizations within the community, for example, a person that is in the Rotary Club, town council, the local Black Lives Matter chapter, is a good candidate for being a community leader based on their frequent involvement.[12]

Community Engagement Best Practices

After working to identify community leaders and taking time to work with them to identify their communities' needs, the next step is engaging the wider community. When working with a new community the engagement often comes in the form of knowledge gathering. While your organization is in this phase, approach it as a listening and learning opportunity, rather than focusing on what your organization currently provides, and what your goals are for the community. If your organization is coming in with a pre-set agenda, you will not be well poised to answer to the needs of the community that are shared in the knowledge gathering phase, and this can lead to feelings of tokenization and that the community's input is not actually valued. If your organization does have a pre-set agenda (i.e. grant deliverables) be forthcoming and transparent about your constraints.

Knowledge gathering can ask questions such as:

- What is your vision for the advancement of community goals?
- What cultural differences do you notice from communities your organization has built relationships with in the past?
- How does the community think/talk about the natural and built environment?
- What are the community needs?
- How can our organization assist in meeting these needs?

Some community needs have clear connections to your organization's work, while others will require creativity and brainstorming with the community to identify how your organization can be of service. Some goals of the community may be entirely outside your organization's scope or expertise. Your organization can still play a role in connecting the community with contacts you have that support those goals. You should also work with the community to figure out how best to enact initiatives and programs that meet the needs they define.[13]

In this process, exchanging information should be prioritized over extracting information from the community. While surveys can be a useful tool in early information-gathering, they do not allow for a connection to the organization in the same way a focus group or workshop does. Here are some alternatives to surveys.

- Advisory Committees- Group of representative stakeholders that provide advice and input to the planning and decision making processes
- Charrette- Intensive brainstorming sessions, usually held over several days, in which participants draw their ideas for planning and design solutions. This is often followed by a presentation to the community to get further input.
- Focus Groups- Interviews and discussions with a group of stakeholders
- Interviews- One-on-one discussions
- Open Houses- Less-structured public meeting, usually inviting stakeholders to your organization's office or setting up in a community center/library. Set up a display so participants can learn about your organization's work at their own pace. Your staff or other experts can be there to answer questions. Stress that participants can come for any amount of time, allowing for flexibility for attendees.

---

[12] People, Partnerships, and Communities USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Social Sciences Team
[13] DEIJ In Action: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

- Public Workshop- Informs and engages the community by combining presentations and small group break outs. This is more structured than an open house.
- Roundtable- Focused discussion where the participants have information in advance. This can be used periodically over the course of a long project as a sounding board for decisions that a smaller group of stakeholders are making.

While the above are more traditional methods of engagement, your organization can consider alternate formats such as asking for feedback through photos, voice recordings, or videos.[14] In the effort to exchange rather than extract information you can couple your information gathering efforts with community programs. Partner with a local organization or municipal department to offer events such as fishing or guided hikes . These may attract participants that would otherwise not come to formal community engagement activities. Conduct one-on-one conversations with participants during the program. This offers them the service of the event, and the hand-on experience of meeting new people within their community.

After all of these activities it is important to get feedback from participants. Instead of a survey simply asking their satisfaction with the event, ask for feedback in an open-ended format to allow for more detailed responses.[15]

Barriers to Participation

When you hold any type of community event, take into account common reasons that people may not participate and what identity groups may be underrepresented. Acknowledge these barriers ahead of time, and work on developing solutions both as an organization and with community partners. This can allow more folks to attend and feel comfortable sharing. Commonly cited reasons for not attending community engagement meetings include:

Commonly Cited Reasons For Not Attending Community Engagement Meetings	
● Lack of knowledge about the political system ● Previous negative community engagement experience ● Historical patterns of municipal (or non-profit) decisions not reflecting community input ● Broken promises made by political candidates (or non-profits), or work that resulted in reinforced distrust of government and institutions ● Meeting times do not consider work schedules, religious holidays, meal times, or other family needs	● Needing to focus on basic needs of self and family ● Not seeing one's culture or identity reflected in meeting format or content ● Fear of being judged, unsafe, or unwelcome ● Transportation barriers ● Childcare needs ● Spiritual beliefs and practices interfering with the meeting ● Immigration status ● Economic barriers

14 6 Essential Strategies for Inclusive Engagement Equity Matters, Seattle Public Utilities Environmental Justice and Service Equity Division

15 Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide, Seattle Office for Civil Rights

Groups That Are Often Underrepresented In Engagement Processes

- People whose preferred language is one other than English
- People with low literacy levels
- Single or working parents
- People of Color
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- People with disabilities
- Faith Communities
- LGBTQ+ People
- Ex-offenders
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Youth
- Elders

Reflect on these lists and what barriers or underrepresented groups may exist in the community you are working to engage. Consider hosting a focus group with incentives to participate (i.e. monetary, food, social) to learn from community members about what their biggest barriers are.

Another good way to start addressing barriers is by putting yourself in others' shoes. What would guarantee your attendance for a meeting, other than content? Providing childcare and food are two clear ways of getting folks in the door. These offerings should be highly publicized with the invitation to the meetings. The food provided should be culturally relevant, try to get the food from a local business. If there are vendors or contractors being used in the project, prioritize procuring them from the community you are working in. Childcare can also be complementary to the topics being discussed. For example, if the meeting is discussing Combined Sewer Overflows, the children can do related activities about water quality, or they can share their own thoughts about the issue depending on their age range.

Many community members may not be able to attend meetings during work hours, and meetings will have to be held after hours or on weekends. Provide flex time for your staff so they can hold meetings at different times without putting more demand on their schedules and leading to burn out. You can also hold multiple meetings at different times or days to help reach more people. You can record the meetings so people who are not able to attend can still learn about the project. Be sure to allow the people watching the recordings an opportunity to provide feedback. This can be done by sharing an email or phone contact for feedback, an online form, reading comments on posted recordings, and more. You can also offer participants the opportunity to share input in ways other than attending a meeting, and present that shared information during the meeting so their thoughts are represented.

Many participants may have or perceive language barriers. Even if English is their primary language, unfamiliar technical jargon and acronyms can make anyone's head spin. Try to avoid jargon and when using new terminology keep a running list on a whiteboard or offer a glossary of terms. If you are working with the same group over a period of time, one fun way to get folks comfortable with technical language is to play jeopardy or bingo to familiarize participants with specific terms and concepts.

For participants that do not speak English, dedicate funds in your project for interpretation and translation services. Partner with community nonprofits or other organizations in the community to help provide translation. Ask what languages their constituents speak, or if literacy is an issue. Provide fair compensation for your translators and interpreters. Hire someone from the community to do this work, they may be able to leverage their community network to share the project with people in their personal lives. Even if there are no language barriers, hire members of the community to assist in data collection. For example, a local will understand that when interviewees talk about "the old bank", "the old corner store", and "the local non-profit office", they are talking about the same piece of property that has changed hands over the years, whereas staff from outside of the community will not have that local knowledge.

Evaluate the meeting venue. Is it accessible via public transportation? Is the location a neutral space in the community, or is it associated with a specific group that may have some attendees feeling out of place? If your organization's office is not in the community, you might use community centers, libraries, municipal meeting rooms, or community-based nonprofit's spaces.

When it comes time to holding the meeting, transparency is vital to earning the trust of the community. If there has been distrust with your organization or similar organizations in the past, acknowledging this sets the tone for an open conversation. Share and demonstrate that you are willing to engage with the constituency and that you value their input, even if it may not be favorable to your organization. Take this opportunity to share why your organization became involved with DEIJ issues and why you identified this specific community to work with. It is critical that your organization is honest about your expertise and resources. Be upfront about the topics you are still learning about, and need help from the community. Be clear in describing what your team's roles and responsibilities can be, your capacity and limitations, and any financial constraints that may exist.

Lastly, incentivizing attendees with financial compensation is a way to compensate them for their valuable insight. If you are in an area with concentrated levels of poverty, or where many constituents do not have bank accounts, compensate them with prepaid gift cards rather than checks.[16]

Resource Imbalances When Working With Community Organizations

Resource imbalances are also important to consider if you are working alongside community organizations that are outside "mainstream or established" organizations. Resource imbalances can look like issues of capacity (having mostly part-time or volunteer staff), lack of funding to conduct large-scale projects, or lack of expertise (i.e. no staff member with grant writing or grant management experience). Your staff can pursue capacity building and funding support to lift up community partners. When looking for funding for the project look for joint applications that can support both organizations. Similar exercises can be used for the general community, shifting resources to directly benefit the community. It is also important to create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the organizations you are working with to articulate what an equitable partnership looks like for both organizations. The MOU can be adapted when challenges arise to ensure that both partners' needs are being met. Be aware that community organizations may communicate one way to funders and another way to the community they serve. Take the time to understand this so both partners are clear about the best language to use in different scenarios.

Ongoing Engagement

In an effort to share power with the community and move to the right on the chart shared on page 6, community engagement needs to be continuous and meaningful. Include your community partners at project inception and engage them throughout the entire process, not when a plan is already in motion and ideas can't be implemented due to planning timelines. Participants in early consultations can continue to be active participants in all steps of the process. They can assist in data collection and interviewing, meet throughout the project to learn about developments and provide feedback on the project's direction, assist in analyzing data, decide how and where to present the data, participate in the data presentation, and decide next steps for future projects.[17,18]

[16] Best Practices for Meaningful Community Engagement Groundwork USA

[17] DEIJ In Action: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

[18] Creating Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities: Strategies for Advancing Smart Growth, Environmental Justice, and Equitable Development EPA

DEIJ in Communications

Online

- Monitor the choice of photos and video subjects to reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion of your community. When using stock photos for digital or print materials, include BIPOC individuals, LGBTQ couples, people of all ages, people with disabilities, and other diverse groups. That being said, be realistic about the current diversity conditions of your organization. Stock photos should not be used in a disingenuous way, like using photos of racially diverse attendees for a conference with predominantly white attendees.
- When sharing articles about DEIJ topics online, make sure the source is authentic and part of the community they are representing in the article. For example, an article about Black women in nature should be written by a Black woman.
- If staff is comfortable, add pronouns to the staff biographies on your organization's website. For more information about gender pronouns visit the "Welcoming Gender and Sexuality in the Workplace" section of the Internal Toolkit.
- Include alternative text for the visually impaired on photos used on social media. Learn how to optimize your website for the visually impaired by visiting here. Include the option for captioning on videos.
- If your organization shares or retweets a post on social media, make sure it's factually accurate. Don't share posts from accounts that don't stand for the same principles as your organization, or you may face backlash.
- Have a consistent voice on social media that reflects your organization's beliefs. Once you post an article expressing a point of view, do not back pedal, because the public can view older posts and see the incongruity over time.

Materials/Writing

- Always create written and graphic materials with an internal code of ethics. When communicating, conduct yourself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, and responsibility to the public. An example internal code of ethics: I will ensure to represent the communities I work with accurately. I will talk about issues in ways that center DEIJ struggle.
- Check all materials for language that may be perceived as biased. Screen for unconscious bias and inappropriate word choice. Learn more here about bias-free communications.
- Don't assume a person's pronouns when writing about them or interviewing them. If you are unsure of someone's pronouns, you can use the gender-neutral "they/them/their" until they provide clarification. When writing about people who are part of the trans community, use this style guide.
- Stay up-to-date on the correct language to use. For example, some years ago "LGBT" was an acceptable acronym, but it has now evolved to "LGBTQ+". One popular acronym is BIPOC, which stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Don't use the term "people of color" if you are only referring to people who are Black.
- It is best to be precise with the language used to describe individuals and/or groups. For example, when talking about a specific identity group (i.e. a Korean-American community), don't use an umbrella term (i.e. BIPOC).
- When addressing a crowd or group of people, don't assume the gender of the whole group with your language. For example, don't say "Hey, guys." or "Good evening, young ladies."
- Find gender neutral alternatives to gendered words or phrases. For example, if your organization offers pregnancy care, ensure when advertising that it's for "birthing parent" or "non-birthing parent" instead of just "women". Learn more about gender inclusive writing.

- When advertising an event, specify as to whether it will be inclusive for disabled people. Specify if there will be a sign language interpreter, if there are handicap accessible ramps, and if parking is nearby. Always put captions on during film screenings for hard of hearing people.
- Don't use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) on any organizational materials unless you are Black. Even if the materials are meant to speak to the Black community and/or your organization's supporters are mostly Black. Learn more here and here.
- Outside of your office space, post signage or flags showing your support for marginalized communities. For example, many businesses post rainbow flag stickers on their doors to show they are welcoming of LGBTQ+ people.
- Translate your organization's materials into Spanish to make it accessible to a larger population. If your organization serves a community with a dominant language other than English, translate materials into that language. Translation work is time consuming and must be compensated fairly. The American Translators Association recommends a minimum of 12 cents per word, this number can go up based on the level of technicality in the material.[19]
- Learn More: Multicultural Communications Best Practices from Resource Media

Press

- When making decisions about which stories to share with the press and in your materials, consider all aspects of diversity, including gender and race/ethnicity, age, religion, political/ideological perspective, disability status, and more.
- Don't tokenize an employee as a spokesperson if they have no real power within the organization. Similarly, don't have a person who is not part of a community speak on behalf of that community.
- Be responsive to incidents that may impact members of your community in relation to DEIJ topics. Respond when it's appropriate for your organization to do so instead of staying silent.
- When writing press pitches, consider story angles that implicitly or explicitly reinforce the benefits of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

Conferences and Major Events

Conferences and other large scale annual events are valuable in bringing together large groups of members, similarly-minded organizations, and/or interested members of the public to engage with the work that your organization is doing. When planning a conference to attract a wide swath of attendees, there are many ways to ensure that the event is inclusive and accessible to different groups. Your organization can partner with community groups and similarly-minded organizations to help expand conference planning capacity and resources. We recommend having a diverse group of partners to help bring different voices into conference sessions. The following sections can be incorporated into your conferences and other large scale events.

Demographic Surveys

If you have been running a conference for many years, or if your organization is putting on its first conference, you can always take time to evaluate how accessible and inclusive the event is. Much like general community engagement, a first step is to assess who is already attending your conference or other major events. This can be done by including a demographic survey alongside the registration for the event or afterwards with a feedback form. It is important to keep the form anonymous so respondents are more comfortable in their reporting. The survey itself nor the questions should be required to answer. The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed's DEIJ Workgroup created a demographic survey for their 2020 Watershed Forum, which can be viewed here. After the results have been collected your staff can come

[19] How much do translators cost and what are their rates? Thumbtack

together to determine which groups are underrepresented at your events, and how to proceed with making the conference more inclusive and accessible.

Land Acknowledgements

As environmental organizations, we are intertwined with the land in our work, and as such we are intertwined with the legacy of Indigenous groups who stewarded the land, prior to and throughout the ongoing colonization of their lands. Land acknowledgements present an opportunity to reflect upon the histories attached to the land on which the event is being held. They serve as a reminder of past and present injustices, and as a starting point to create collaborative and respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. Land acknowledgements should be motivated by genuine respect and support for Indigenous people, not due to guilt or because you see other organizations doing so. Contact the local Indigenous peoples and those who were forcibly removed from the land to ask how they would like to be recognized. When contacting these groups for help, ask what you can be doing for them, and compensate them for their labor in educating your organization. Land acknowledgements can serve as a first step to becoming allies with your local Indigenous population(s), and actively building relationships with these groups to build authentic equitable relationships. The local Lenni-Lenape tribes of the Delaware River watershed can be found here: Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape (Bridgeton NJ), and the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania.

A simple land acknowledgement can sound like, "I would like to begin by acknowledging that we gather at (Insert Location) on the traditional land of the Lenni-Lenape Peoples past and present (if your event is in the Delaware River watershed), and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. "When making your acknowledgement use appropriate language that accurately describes historical injustices rather than sugar coating history. Words like genocide, ethnic cleansing, stolen land, and forced removal are all appropriate ways to describe the injustices faced by Indigenous populations. Remember that Indigenous people are still within our region, and as such your acknowledgement should not only be focused on the past. While land acknowledgements honor the historic and present day injustices towards Indigenous peoples, they also should serve as a celebration and empowerment of present-day Indigenous populations. If you are holding your event outside of the watershed you can use this website to determine whose land you are on.[20]

Inclusivity Practices

For some identity groups, such as BIPOC or LGBTQ+ attendees, identity-based networking and mentoring sessions can connect attendees from these often under-represented groups with one another to build relationships and connect with their peers. In these spaces, identity-based issues in the environmental sector can be discussed. This creates an atmosphere where participants do not have to censor language to appeal to the majority group or serve as educators on their own identities.

Name tags are an often overlooked method of creating an inclusive environment. Name pronunciation can be added to help attendees address one another properly. Dr. Pragya Agarwal, the author of SWAY: The Science of Unconscious Bias, is quoted as saying "When names are mispronounced, it negates a person's sense of self, betraying their culture and eradicating an important part of their ethnic identity... People of color generally -and rightly- resent the mispronunciation of their name because it amounts to a distortion of their identity".[21] The pronouns of attendees can also be included on name tags. By acknowledging that you cannot know a person's pronouns just by looking at them, adding a section on name tags for pronouns is a way to signal to attendees that transgender and nonbinary attendees are welcomed. If your organization does this, try to ensure that your staff has adequate knowledge about pronoun usage and will honor the pronouns on someone's name tag even if the pronouns "do not match" a person's physical appearance. To not do so would be insulting to people who were vulnerable in sharing their pronouns, contradicting the inclusive space that is

[20] A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Native Governance Center
[21] Name discrimination: why we need to stop telling people they have a 'difficult' name, Stylist, Poorna Bell

trying to be built. Information why your organization is including pronunciations or pronouns on your name tags can be included in the registration page as well as the event program to help explain the importance of these practices.

Disability Accessibility

As for disability inclusion, there are many ways to increase the accessibility of your event. In the planning phase of the event you may consider appointing one person to be the "Accessibility Chair", whose main role is to ensure that the event is accessible as possible for all attendees. This person would be involved in all stages of the event, from choosing the location, venue, conference webpage, session submission and review process, establishing presentation guidelines, meals and social events, field trips, and any other aspect of your conference. This person can also serve as the contact for any attendees with disabilities to ask questions about accessibility at the conference. The disabled community is a wide umbrella with many different access needs. Below is a general list of things to consider when planning for accessibility, but if there is a specific disability group that you are working to engage it is best to meet with an organization that represents that community to determine their needs.

Choosing a Location

- Based on the geographic region that your attendees will be coming from, is the conference located in a place that is accessible by public transportation? If the event is in a rural location, can there be a meeting place (i.e. school parking lot) that attendees can be transported to and from the program location?
- Are there environmental factors that may be a problem for attendees (i.e. high altitudes, significant pollution)?
- If folks cannot attend due to travel constraints is there a way to attend virtually?
- Based on the time of year of your session, is the location likely to have snow or ice?

Choosing a Venue and Hotel

Much of this can be provided by the venue staff.

- How would an attendee get from the public transit stop to the hotel or venue?
- If the event is not in the same hotel that attendees are staying, how far away is it? How would attendees move from one location to the next?
- Is the building wheelchair accessible through the main entrance? Are doorways and all important routes at least 32 inches wide?
- Are the elevators accessible? Think about tactile buttons, auditory feedback, visual feedback, wheelchair-height controls.
- How easy is the space to navigate for those with no or low vision? Large open spaces with few landmarks are more difficult to navigate. Are there trip hazards or protruding objects in the space, is the floor flat or uneven?
- Is there Braille labeling on elevators and conference rooms? If not, those can be added by the event organizers for the event.
- Does the venue provide alternative emergency devices for Deaf and Hard of Hearing guests?
- Is the venue free from strong sensory stimuli? Think of smells, loud areas, or bright/flashing lights that can create issues for attendees with sensory sensitivities or other health conditions.
- Has the venue staff had disability awareness training? What is the process the venue uses to accommodate accessibility requests?
- How far is the walk from the disabled parking spaces to the venue, guest rooms, or conference rooms?
- Are the accessible restrooms on the same floor as the main conference?
- If there is a raised stage, is there a way for wheelchair users to get onto the stage? If there are just steps, are there railings for those with mobility issues that do not use a wheelchair?
- Do meeting spaces have an induction or hearing loop (a sound system that is designed for people with hearing aids)?
- Is there space for wheelchair users in the meeting rooms?

- Are there rooms that can be set aside for breastfeeding or pumping, or as quiet spaces for those with sensory issues?
- How many wheelchair accessible rooms are there? Can the hotel hold accessible rooms for attendees? Can attendees specify these rooms when registering? What other accessibility offerings are there in the rooms (i.e. two beds for an assistant to stay, roll in showers, shower hoists and slings availability)?
- Does the venue allow service animals?
- Do rooms have ADA automatic door openers?

Considering Your Budget

- If you are providing captioning and sign language translation, plan for about $1,500 per day to cover the expense. Sign language interpretation should be used for sessions, breaks, and social events.
- If multiple people require captioning or sign language interpretation inquire what sign language they use. If they are different, captioning can be used for everyone while multiple interpreters would be needed otherwise. If there are multiple tracks or options for sessions you will need multiple interpreters or captioners.
- Be transparent about what accessibility options your budget allows for and what it does not when allowing attendees to submit requests for accommodations.

Accessible Event Webpage

- Use many of the suggestions covered in the Communications section of this toolkit.
- The event webpage should offer information on how to create accessible submissions for presenters, as well as a space to share the accessibility options the conference is providing. This should include what your staff knows about the venue accessibility, as well as who to contact if there are accommodations requested.

Online Registration

- Include a space for attendees to request accommodations and specify their accessibility requirements. Include deadlines if there are any (i.e. when the request for a sign language interpreter is due).
- Include a space for attendees to indicate dietary restrictions, and ask for clarification if cross contamination is an issue.
- Follow up with registrants to clarify their requests to ensure your staff understands their needs.

Catering and Meals

- What is the process the venue uses to prepare special meals without cross contamination?
- If the venue cannot provide certain dietary requests, can you work with a supplementary caterer? This is important not only for those with disabilities, allergies or intolerances, but also for those with cultural dietary restrictions such as halal, kosher, vegetarian, or vegan.
- A name tag system (like colored stickers) can be used to indicate specialized meals if they are being provided by hotel staff.
- Label the meal options in advance and during the event with ingredients or indicating presence or absence of certain products.
- Try to position the buffet (if you are using one) in a low traffic area so attendees with low-mobility can select their food without getting jostled by passersby.
- Do the seating arrangements allow for people who use mobility devices to sit anywhere, or can they only sit at a specific table(s)?

Local Arrangements and Offerings

- If a health or accessibility issue arises with one of the guests make sure that all of the staff and volunteers working the event know and have the contact of the Accessibility Chair.
- Gather information on local emergency doctors, hospitals, wheelchair repair, and veterinarians for service animals.
- Offer an orientation session before the conference so attendees and speakers can learn the layout. If the layout of rooms will change throughout the program let attendees and speakers know in advance so they can plan to join.
- If you have an attendee list make it available to guests at a central location, so visually impaired attendees can know who is in attendance and who they may wish to speak to.
- Provide the location and time of local Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous meetings, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance meetings, or other relevant support group meetings.

Conference Sessions and Presentations

- Are you providing speakers with handheld, podium, or lapel microphones? Speakers with physical disabilities may prefer a lapel mic.
- When it is time for questions, will attendees have to move to a standing microphone or will a microphone be passed around?
- Ensure that disabled access doors are unlocked and available all day.
- Provide captions on videos being shared. Papers and presentations can be shared ahead of time for attendees with visual impairments, captioners, and sign language interpreters. Fonts used on slides should be large (at least 24 point) and clear on a contrasting background.
- Handouts offered should also have large-print variations with dark font color and light paper.
- The session program should be accessible electronically with large print, and if possible at least one copy in Braille.
- For attendees with visual impairments, speakers should describe key elements of slides, videos, and visual demonstrations.
- During audience questions, a microphone should be used so everyone can hear, and the question-asker should state their name for the benefit of those who cannot see them.
- If an interpreter or captioner is present ensure that they are well lit, and that those using their services can be seated where they can visually see them.

Social Activities

- Will social events have broad appeal? Are they purely visual or auditory based? Are they excessively loud or visually intense?
- If you are holding off site events, is the transportation provided accessible? If you are planning on walking, let attendees know the distance, and if the walking route is wheelchair accessible.
- Spread out chairs or stools in the event space for those who cannot stand for long periods, or for those who want to have a face-to-face conversation with attendees in wheelchairs or scooters.
- Reserve a quiet space for people to gather for those that find the main area overstimulating.
- If the event will include flashing lights or loud noises, notify attendees in advance. [22,23,24]

The Choose Clean Water Coalition's accessibility guide for their annual conference is one example of what your organization can provide. Please visit here to view their guide.

---

[22] Accessible Conference Guide, SIGACCESS
[23] Holding Inclusive Events: A Guide to Accessible Event Planning Autistic Self Advocacy Network
[24] Guidelines for Accessible Presentations Museum Arts Culture Access Consortium

Virtual Events and Webinars

With the onset of COVID-19, many organizations are adapting their events to be held virtually, alongside commonly held webinars throughout the year. Many of the inclusive aspects listed above are also pertinent to a virtual platform, such as identity-based networking sessions, including pronouns on attendee's names, land acknowledgements, captioning, sign language interpretation, or asking about accessibility needs in event registrations.

Specifically for virtual events, speakers having their cameras on is valuable for attendees that lip read. Adequate lighting, wearing contrasting colors, and using a virtual background that does not wash away presenters' faces are also important for lip reading attendees.

For attendees with visual impairments, a shared screen often does not allow functionality for screen readers. Materials should be available beforehand or provided via the chat, and speakers should still explain concepts in an understandable manner and be sure to use easy-to-read fonts and stylings.[25]

While virtual programming is a wonderful way to include people who may not normally have access to travel to attend in-person events, it is important to keep in mind that virtual events and webinars come with their own set of potential barriers and digital divides, whether it be lack of access to technology or the inability to use it. While designing virtual programming, consider providing a call-in option, a chat option, or even hosting a flexible or hybrid event to accommodate different levels of access and abilities.

External Programming

Volunteer Procurement and Event Advertising

If you are trying to engage a new demographic of volunteers, or advertising to a new community for events like trash pick ups or native plant sales, it is likely that you will have to implement different approaches compared to how you currently look for volunteers. Your organization may:

- Attend community events
- Neighborhood organization meetings[26]
- Leverage relationships with community leaders and use their word-of-mouth
- Partner with existing community organizations
- Disseminate both printed information (i.e. brochures, postcards), and online website and email lists
- Cable TV advertising
- Op-eds, feature stories, and press releases in community newspapers, including media predominantly serving BIPOC communities
- Provide ongoing information about projects and opportunities at public facilities (i.e. libraries, community centers)[27]

It is important to note that if your organization is working to engage a new demographic population, your staff and public facing volunteers should be trained in cultural competency for the new group. If you are spending the time and effort to directly target specific communities, but they do not feel welcomed by your organization upon their arrival, distrust in your organization will build. If your organization provides outdoor programming, consider how you might make it more accessible to people with varying disabilities. For example, you might consider hosting a hike for people who are d/Deaf

[25] Are Your Virtual meetings Accessible for People with Disabilities? Start with this Checklist Judith Hellerstein, Internet Society
[26] Reflecting on Efforts to Design an Inclusive Citizen Science Project in West Baltimore Amanda E. Sorensen et. al
[27] Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide, Seattle Office for Civil Rights

and Hard of Hearing, led by someone who is also d/Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Or you might consider creating easily walkable paths at your nature preserve to better meet the needs of disabled folks. Advertise these events appropriately to the communities they are meant to engage.

Microaggressions

When working with communities that differ from the communities that you have worked with in the past, using inclusive language is important to creating a space where everyone feels welcome. Be aware of “microaggressions”. These are subtle, often unintentional, statements or behaviors that communicate bias towards a marginalized group. A common way of explaining the impact of microaggressions is to compare them to mosquito bites. While having a few mosquito bites is an annoying experience, being covered in mosquito bites from head to toe and being bitten more every day can be exhausting. For those who only get a few mosquito bites, it can be hard to understand why someone is complaining about a “simple mosquito bite”, or to empathize with their complaints. This video does a great job outlining microaggressions using this mosquito metaphor.

Microaggressions can be verbal, behavioral, and environmental. Verbal microaggressions are the most commonly discussed. The “microaggressor” can verbalize one statement with harmful implications that they may not be aware of. One example is asking a person of color, “Where are you from? You speak good English.” In doing so, the “microaggressor” is communicating they consider the other person to be a foreigner due to their race. Even though the microaggressor thought that they were complimenting someone, they were perpetuating stereotypes that People of Color (POC) are not from America, and have to be foreigners.

Behavioral microaggressions are seen in the actions that the microaggressor takes. This can be things like a white store owner following a POC customer around the store thinking that they are more likely to steal, crossing the street when a black man is walking towards the microaggressor, or mistaking a POC for a service worker.

Environmental microaggressions are on a larger scale, usually not at the hands of a single individual. These can include things like not having gender neutral bathrooms (signalling that nonbinary people are not considered at that establishment), or naming a school after a slave-holder (signaling to black students that a slave-holder is still held in high regard in their community despite their racist actions).

Calling Out or Calling In Microaggressions

If you are witnessing or experiencing a microaggression, you may feel uncomfortable and not know how to address it. Two main ways of addressing microaggressions (and many other disagreements) are “calling out” and “calling in”. Using the example of your staff holding a meeting and someone says a verbal microaggression, calling out would be correcting the behavior in the staff meeting, and calling in could look like talking to that person after the meeting. The following chart outlines the reasons that each approach may be suitable in different scenarios.[28]

[28] Interrupting Bias: Calling Out vs. Calling In Seed the Way

Calling Out	Calling In
You need to let someone know their words or actions are unacceptable immediately. You need to interrupt what is happening to prevent further harm. Allows for greater accountability for the microaggressor when others witness their behavior being corrected. Educates not only the microaggressor but those around them who may also be unaware of that behavior being unacceptable.	Creates an opportunity to explore deeper, and explain the harm associated. Allows for a person to not immediately go on the defensive if they feel cornered by being corrected in front of their peers. Requires compassion and investment of time and energy on the person calling in the microaggressor.

When to call out or call in can be a difficult call. Below is a list of questions that you can ask yourself if you are unsure which approach to take.

- Who has the power in this situation? If you are in a position of power calling out someone beneath you, it may make them more defensive and guarded from your feedback. Consider calling in.
- Am I calling out a person or a systematic behavior? If you see the same phrases or behaviors repeatedly by different people, calling out can educate everyone at once, rather than having to have individual conversations with each person.
- How much energy and emotional labor am I able to share right now? Calling in requires more time to have a meaningful conversation with the microaggressor, which can be emotionally draining, whereas calling out can be more immediate and less time consuming.
- Is this person likely to change their problematic behavior? If not, calling out would be better as it creates accountability so others know that that behavior has been called out, making them aware that the behavior is not acceptable for themselves, and can call the person out in the future. Rather than having the person understand why what they are doing is harmful, the goal should just be for the behavior to stop.
- Who is in the room? Much like the first question about who has power in the situation, if an authority figure is present, calling out with their presence may make the microaggressor more defensive.
- Am I centering the needs of myself or the group? If you think calling in would be damaging to yourself but feel the urge to do so because it will create less discomfort for the group, prioritize your own feelings if you are receiving the microaggression. If you are a bystander, calling out may make the microaggressor direct their defensiveness towards the receiver, making calling in a better option.
- What am I hoping to accomplish? If you just want the behavior to cease in the moment, call them out. If you think there is space to create deeper understanding about why what is being said or done is harmful, calling in can create a more educational atmosphere.

<u>Reacting as a Bystander</u>

When you are a bystander to a microaggression, especially if there is someone who can be negatively impacted by that microaggression in the room, the decision of calling out or calling in may not be up to you. The most important thing is to center the receiver in your actions. If they do not call out the microaggressor, there is likely a reason for them doing so. This may be that they are uncomfortable calling that person out, they have talked to them already and their behavior has not changed, or they are planning to call them in after the interaction ends. Calling out or calling in as a bystander can also put attention on the receiver that they may not want. As a bystander it is best to diffuse the situation by interrupting the behavior rather than calling out/in the behavior itself. Some things that you can do include:

- Distraction- Something as simple as dropping your pen on the ground can disrupt the microaggression from continuing.
- Use humor- If you are comfortable, use humor to point out what the person is saying. For example someone saying “That sofa is so gay” can be countered with “Oh I didn’t know we were holding this meeting at a middle school in 2005”.
- Be literal, or refuse to rely on the assumption made- Using the previous example, you can say “I didn’t know sofas had a sexual orientation”, to not feed into the assumption that gay is a synonym for bad.
- Ask questions that invite discussion- Continuing with that example, you can ask “What do you mean by that?”, to encourage the person to understand that they are equating gay with bad.
- State that you are uncomfortable- Rather than saying “what you just said could be hurtful to XYZ group”, as a bystander without the identity being marginalized you can simply say that the phrase makes you uncomfortable, and you would like the person to refrain from speaking that way

With all of these examples it is still important to center the receiver of the microaggression. Even something as simple as knowing eye contact can go a long way in signaling that the aggressor was out of line and that you support the receiver. You can follow up with them after the instance, acknowledging that what was said or done was wrong, and asking how they would like to proceed.[29]

Reacting to Being Called Out/In

If you are called out or in for a microaggression, it can make you feel defensive, embarrassed, or stressed. While feeling that way is a natural reaction, it is important to keep in mind that the person calling you out or in is likely doing so because they believe that you have the capacity to understand and make the change they are asking for. If the person calling you out or in thought that you would never change this behavior they likely would not waste their time correcting you.

When someone is taking the time to correct your mistakes, listen and be grateful that they trust you enough to do so. Do not make it about yourself, either by over apologizing and making the person correcting you feel as though they need to tend to your emotional needs, or by deflecting by saying you would never do something like that. Thank them for their vulnerability in correcting you, and take the time on your own to understand their message. While it may be tempting to have the person correcting you answer all of your questions, marginalized people do not have to be educators to their non-marginalized peers. Take some time to do your own research on why what you said or did was harmful. You may also consider following up after taking time to reflect. This follow up should not be used as a way to rehash the incident or look for validation, rather to ensure that the receiver feels more respected.[30]

Validating Microaggressions at the Organizational Level

Because microaggressions are often subtle, people may feel as though they will not be taken seriously if they bring them up as something that is bothering them. This furthers the feeling of isolation that the receiver of a microaggression may feel. In order to create a culture in which microaggressions are considered to be serious, it is important that staff and volunteers know what they are. Knowing that the organization acknowledges the impact that microaggressions have is a way to have folks on the receiving end know that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Modeling good behavior when being called out or in, especially if you are in a position of authority, will also help to create a culture in which people are open to feedback without immediately becoming defensive. This is in line with creating an overall culture of mistake acceptance. Asking others how they like to receive feedback, and inviting feedback yourself is another good way to foster a culture in which feedback is welcomely accepted.

[29] Being an Active Bystander: Strategies for Challenging the Emergence of Bias Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University

[30] You’ve Been Called Out for a Microaggression. What Do You Do? Rebecca Knight, Harvard Business Review

All of this information, with many more examples, was covered in CDRW's webinar "Microaggressions: Why Language Matters". To watch the full webinar please visit here.

Community Science Programs

Community Science Programs, often called Citizen Science Projects, are valuable tools for many environmental organizations, both to conduct research and engage a population directly with the work your organization does. Some communities, especially those with high undocumented immigrant populations, can be wary of the usage of the word citizen in "Citizen Science''. If your organization is planning to work in such an environment, consider opting for a similar term such as "Community Science Program'', as this toolkit will do for the remainder of this section, other than when directly citing specific projects. Studies have shown that community science participants benefit both in scientific learning and civic engagement, but participation in such projects does not reflect the overall demographics of the United States. Community Science program participants skew towards white, well-educated, individuals of retirement age.

Use messaging to empower participants. Rather than viewing them as recipients of the work, they are stakeholders and equal partners of the project. When underrepresented communities are involved in community science programs they can use the program to define, investigate, and address environmental concerns their own communities are facing. When projects are designed to align with community priorities, participants co-manage the work, the community is engaged throughout the process, and the results are shared with the community, community science programs have greater success in attracting a more diverse audience. This process aligns well with the recommendations covered in the "Best Practices for Community Engagement" section of this toolkit.

Communicating project goals and understanding volunteer motivation is also a critical piece of cultivating diverse participation in community science programs. For example, researchers running a community science program in Arizona studying contaminants present in rainwater found that white, college educated participants expressed their motivation for joining the project as an opportunity to contribute to scientific research and for personal learning, while the Latinx participants and those without a college degree were less likely to share this motivation. The latter groups were more likely to cite their motivation as being based on health concerns and potential risks that the study would uncover for their communities. Other identified potential motivators for the Latinx community were the low-cost rain barrel incentive for participation, as well as having heard about the opportunity through a trusted community leader. The study also identified potential barriers to participation that may have been addressed with clear communication of project goals. It was reported that some Latinx constituents were unwilling to participate due to rumors that the project was aimed to damage the local mining company, which is a major employer in the area for their community. Similar dynamics might be present in communities that your organization is working in. Take the time to work with the community to identify as many of these potential barriers and motivators before starting your project.[31]

It is important to work with the community when designing the project, as these constituents will be more aware of different constraints participants from their community may face and how best to approach these challenges. For example, one citizen science program in Baltimore adapted their data reporting protocol to allow for online and paper submissions, and provided pre-stamped return envelopes for those who opted for paper submissions. Another factor discussed in the Baltimore project was frustration within the community regarding the scope of the project. The research capacity of this program was focused on mosquito burdens, and many community participants expressed frustration that there were larger issues facing their community, both environmentally focused and not. In working with community contacts the project worked to align its scope alongside issues such as vacancy, dumping, or health risks that the broader community valued. Another important lesson learned was if your project involves outreach to other organizations or

[31] Engaging Diverse Citizen Scientists for Environmental Health: Recommendations from Participants and Promotoras Leona F. Davis et. al

agencies, think about the current relationship these institutions have with the community, and if putting the onus on the participants will increase the already present distrust. Neglecting to do so can quickly lead to participant fatigue, as illustrated by the Baltimore program. Part of their work was to contact local services about issues they faced while doing their research on a monthly basis. When they weren't receiving responses from these services to address the reported abandoned buildings, litter, and illegal dumping program, participants' effort to report turned into negative reinforcement that the city did not take these issues seriously, lowering participant's sense of agency.

When sharing results with the community, different approaches may be used than when your organization has shared results with the scientific community. Rather than simply making the end paper available to the public, you may consider more interactive approaches to sharing the information gathered. This can look like sharing photographs, videos, or presentations at community events.[32] Especially if this is one of your organization's first community science programs with a particular community, it is wise to dedicate time in the presentation to sharing how the participants benefited from the program alongside sharing the results, in an effort to entice more participants in future programs.

Community Science programs often come with the connotation of outside-community actors coming in with predetermined projects backed by short-term grants that often do not allow for flexibility for interdisciplinary issues that may arise from the recommendations put forth by community participants. Some institutions are evolving towards Community-Owned and Managed-Research, or Community-Based Participatory Research approaches. These methods provide for community ownership and participation at all phases of the process, from generating the research question, to designing the study, to carrying out the work and dissemination of information. While they are valuable for participant engagement and empowerment, in order to create a successful program, communities need a compelling need, high organizational capacity, willing partners, and funding that allows for community control.[33] If these factors are not currently present it will take time to assist in capacity building, and Community Science programs can work to identify and create many of those requirements. Even if your program is not based on the Community-Owned and Managed Research or Community-Based Participatory Research frameworks, elements of these approaches can be integrated with the end goal of these methods being utilized in future projects. If this is the case, be transparent with participants and partners that these end-goals exist, so the groundwork for future projects can be laid in the initial program.

Youth Programming

Elements of DEIJ can and should be intertwined with programming directed towards youth. From considering the language used when communicating with children to ensure inclusivity, to reassessing lesson plans to integrate topics of environmental justice. Simple changes to the language being used can create a more inclusive atmosphere. For example, rather than saying "Bring this home to your mom and dad", saying something like "Share this with whoever is picking you up today". The latter phrasing allows children who live with single parents, same gender parents, grandparents, older siblings, or any other configuration of family that does not have both a mother and father present to be included.

Lesson plans necesitate a more thorough review and analysis to incorporate elements of DEIJ. While this is especially true in lessons discussing historical concepts, the impacts of this country's systemic racism permeate into education in the present day. There are a variety of lesson plans that address environmental justice, and reaching a more truthful history. Here are a sampling of lesson plans:

- The Wilderness Society's Public Lands in the United States Curriculum
- Teaching Tolerance's Analyzing Environmental Racism Lesson (Grades 6-12)
- NAACP's Teaching Intersectionality and Environmental Justice in Our Classrooms
- Defending the Early Years' Columbus Who? Dialogue on Discovery with Three-Year-Olds

[32] Reflecting on Efforts to Design an Inclusive Citizen Science Project in West Baltimore Amanda E. Sorensen et. al

[33] Realizing the Promise of Community-Based Participatory Research: Community Partners Get Organized! Sarena D. Seifer, Ella Greene-Monton

The Zinn Education Project works to center the lives of ordinary people as agents of change, rather than the "Great Man Theory of History", that centers individual actions above collective. This approach also works to center groups that are often only given token attention, such as people of color, workers, or women. The project has lessons grouped into specific themes. Visit here for their Environment themed lessons, that can be further refined to include grade level and resource type.

Lesson plans currently being used by your organization can also be adapted to include elements of environmental justice and equity. This involves taking time to understand the principles of environmental justice, and creating connections with those principles and the topics being covered by current activities. Overall, environmental justice is people-centered, and how inequitable environmental impacts hurt marginalized communities disproportionately. By incorporating this framework, including the impact a certain concept being taught has on people, and how different groups may be harmed by those impacts is a good way to integrate Environmental Justice into education activities.

For example, take the "You are What You Eat" lesson from NJDEP's Fishing For Answers in an Urban Estuary. The focal activity looks to examine bioaccumulation and biomagnification in the Newark Bay Estuary, assigning students to be oysters, blue crabs, and herring gulls. The oysters will collect different color markers or objects meant to symbolize plankton and detritus. The blue crabs then "eat" the oysters, and the herring gulls "eat" the blue crabs, taking the different color objects along with them. The leader of the activity then reveals that some of the colors indicated toxin contaminated detritus, and if each "animal" had over a certain amount of toxic detritus then it did not survive. The lesson plan outlined then bridges into a conversation about what else could eat oysters and blue crabs, which includes people, and then leads to a discussion about Fish Consumption Advisories. To be more direct about the connection with people, the herring gull can be replaced with people eating the blue crabs. When it is revealed that the crabs and oysters have toxins in them, the conversation concentrates on the impacts to people quicker. This then can lead to more time to discuss why people may be eating the contaminated crabs (i.e. sustenance fishing, cultural importance, lack of knowledge about toxins), and what groups of people are harmed most by contaminated crabs (people in areas with contaminated water, people who rely on the fish/crabs in their diets due to poverty, people who cannot read the advisory signs). The group can then come up with creative ways to address the inequalities, above just stopping people from fishing in contaminated waters. The simple substitution of people for herring gulls allows for more time of the lesson to be focused on environmental justice issues.

Adapting lesson plans like these are impactful when working in communities directly impacted by these issues, but are also important to integrate when speaking to youth that are not impacted as directly by environmental justice issues. Children are well attuned to the concept of fairness, and leveraging that concept is important when discussing environmental justice topics with all ages.

Your organization may also consider offering diverse nature books at your center or during story time-activities. Children seeing their identities reflected in the books being read, especially ones about nature, demonstrates that people like them are a part of the environmental community. A study found that extended contact through reading picture books can reduce prejudice in young children in instances where direct contact with a certain identity group is low.[34] WonderKin has a list of nature books with diverse and inclusive leads, and Diverse Book Finder's article, "Where are the books about Black kids in Nature?" has a list of books along with analysis of the contents within them.

When working with older youth, especially in long-term activities such as internship cohorts or repeated programming, it is important for your organization to provide resources to assist in establishing a Youth-Engagement-to-Environmentalist

[34] Extended Contact through Story Reading in School: Reducing Children's Prejudice toward the Disabled Lindsey Cameron, Adam Rutland, Journal of Social Issues

pipeline. Can your organization connect students of high school age to internship opportunities in their area? Are there other ways they can be involved in the environment outside of your organization meeting their class? Especially after the youth end their time with the programs you provide, are there clear steps for them to continue to engage with environmental organizations as adults? When working with an internship cohort, for example, are graduates of the program connected with past cohorts that they can leverage for future jobs and opportunities, both during and after the program? While youth engagement is clearly valuable, those who are exposed to it can lose interest in conservation and environmentalism if they do not see a clear way for them to continue in the field, or if they do not see representation for individuals like themselves in the environmental field. These initiatives should be alumni led, but the organization(s) that brought them together initially should provide resources, meeting spaces, and connections to funding opportunities in order for the group to succeed.

Identity Based Programming

Groups that have been historically alienated from the traditional environmental community may feel more comfortable engaging in programs with others of their same identity group. For example, National Audubon Society holds “Let’s Go Birding Together” walks during pride month, welcoming “those who identify as LGBTQ, allies, families, and any who wants to enjoy an outdoor experience that is inclusive”.[35] While organizations may currently operate under an inclusion policy of nonexclusivity, i.e. “Everyone is welcome to participate in our programs”, for groups that have historically been left out, a more direct approach of intentional and affirming inclusivity may be more appropriate to communicate that not only will they not be turned away, but their presence is valued. Programming directed towards a specific group does not alienate those who do not fall into that group. Rather, it nurtures a sense of community for those who have been excluded by previous methods.[36]

If there is an identity-based group that your organization would like to hold dedicated programming for, a good first step would be to partner with a trusted identity-based organization in your community that has already built trust with that community. Any staff or volunteers that would participate in the program should have cultural competency training prior to running the program to ensure that the participants feel as comfortable as possible. Providing culturally relevant programming is also critical to ensuring that the program is meaningful and engaging to your new audience. Hiring members of the demographic group you are looking to engage is also important, as they will see themselves represented in your staff, and those members of staff may have insights about community needs and attitudes.The following section includes information based on identity groups to assist organizations in learning more about the specific challenges these groups can face, and suggestions of best practices when engaging with these communities.

Identity-Specific Resources for Programming and Engagement

While the following sections are broken down into different demographic groups, your organization should be aware that many individuals can belong to more than one of these groups. This is the concept of “intersectionality”, and individuals with multiple marginalized identities have specific experiences based upon the layering of those identities. If you are looking to engage a specific demographic group, be aware that there is a wide range of diversity within groups and it is important to be aware of issues that impact many demographics in anticipation of this.

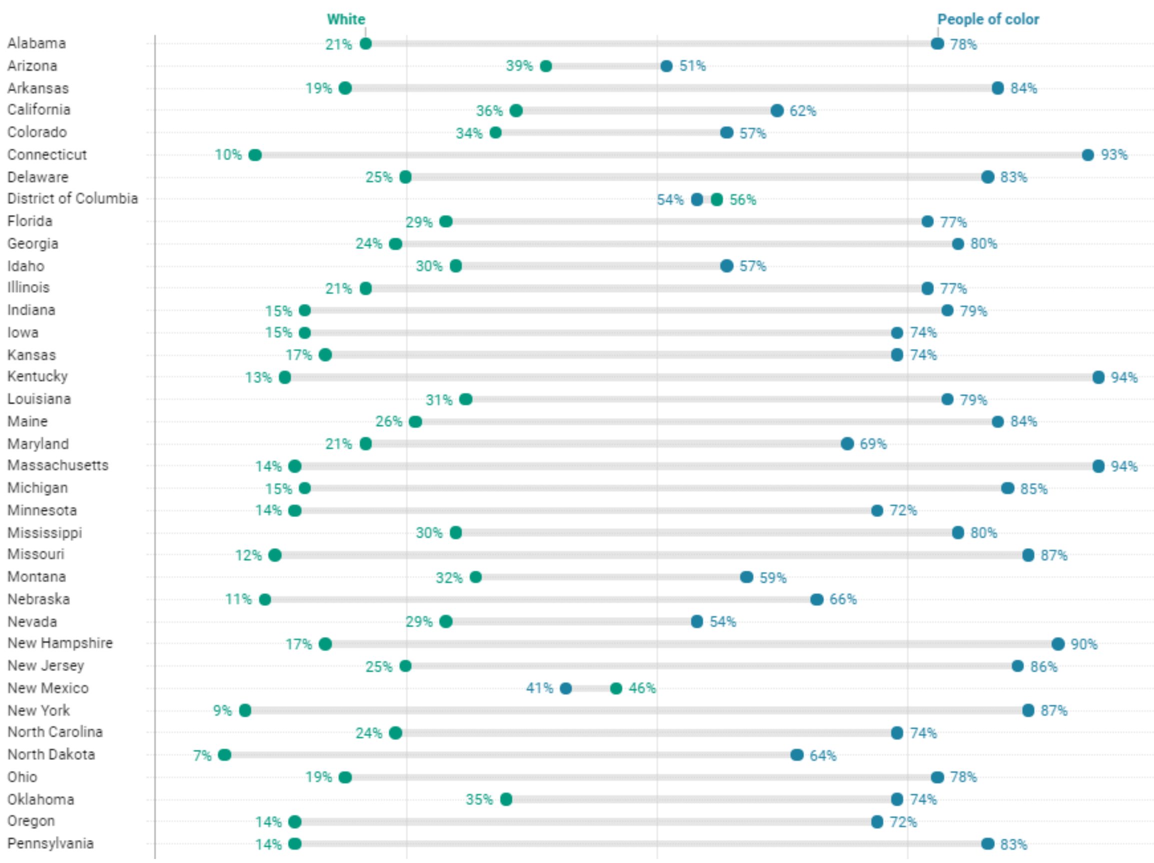
[35] ‘Let’s Go Birding Together’ Creates Dedicated Space for LGBTQ Bird Lovers Audubon New York
[36] Promoting LGBT Inclusion and Awareness in Programs and Facilities Joseph Martin, M.S. National Recreation and Park Association

Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)

The disparities in nature access are well documented for communities of color. A report led by the Hispanic Access Foundation and the Center for American Progress found that communities of color are nearly three times more likely (74% v. 23%) than white communities to live in nature deprived areas (areas with little to no access to parks or green spaces, specifically census tracts that have a higher proportion of natural area lost to human activities than the state-level median). For non-white families with children, 75% live in a census tract with less natural land than the state average.[37] The below chart, from the Center for American Progress illustrates that point by state. The chart has been cropped after all the states within the Delaware River Watershed Basin are listed, for a complete list you can [visit the report here.]

Across the United States, people of color are far more likely than white people to live in a place that is nature deprived

Percent of people living in a nature-deprived area by census tract demographics in the United States, 2017



In any given year, less than half of African Americans aged 13-17 will not participate in a single outdoor recreation activity. Trail running, fishing, and biking are the three most popular outdoor recreation activities, and less than 30% of participants identify as People of Color.[38] Even with decreased levels of nature access and outdoor recreation, surveys of racial minorities indicate higher levels of concern when compared to whites about climate change, and more supportive of policies that address climate change.[39]

---

[37] How 'nature deprived' neighborhoods impact the health of people of color Alejandra Borunda, National Geographic
[38] Diversity in the Outdoors: Navigating Nature as a POC Jenn Sanchez, Campendium
[39] The Unbearable Whiteness of Hiking and How to Solve It Lornett Vestal, Sierra Club

This disconnect, of low levels of outdoor recreation and nature access while still being highly concerned with environmental issues, can be explained by discrimination and racism, both historically in the United State's laws and in interpersonal interactions. Practices like redlining, forced migration, and economic segregation all contributed to communities of color being distanced from natural areas. The violent dispossession of lands from Indigenous Peoples, coupled with the continuation of failures of allowing development that threatens sacred sites and indigenous land pose a threat to Indigenous populations living on clean land with access to nature.

If your organization is engaging a community with low levels of nature access, consider how residents would need to travel to get to a natural site. Is it accessible by public transportation? Could carpools be set up to decrease the expense of gas? Or, can your organization work to increase the amount of natural space within the community, if that is desired? Communities with low access to nature can be wary of new natural spaces, especially when considering concerns of higher crime or natural areas leading to gentrification.

If there are natural spaces that are being underutilized within a community, take time to understand their concerns and why the areas are not being visited, and how those concerns can be mitigated. Parks that are intentionally designed with safety in mind, with ongoing programming and maintenance attract a steady stream of residents that can deter crime. The report "Can Parks Help Cities Fight Crime?" published on The Conversation gives more details on the intersection of parks and crime, if that is a concern with the community you are engaging.

Think about the messaging being sent when your organization talks about "nature" or "the outdoors". Does the messaging honor smaller urban parks as nature, or is that phrase reserved for wide open swaths of land? If people feel as though they have to travel far from home to enjoy the outdoors they will be less likely to engage with nature on a regular basis, rather than seeing their own community as a place with valuable natural spaces. This is also true for what outdoor recreation activities are valued. Is your organization putting a higher priority on certain types of recreation (i.e. camping, rock climbing, hiking) compared to others (picnics, local fishing, gardening). There are many different ways to enjoy the outdoors, and if certain activities that may be more culturally relevant are disparaged for not being true outdoor recreation people will feel excluded.

It has only been a little over 50 years since the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which among other things granted permission for Black communities to enter public spaces like National and State Parks – spaces they had been banned from prior. Black people were also segregated from Federal Programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps, and that legacy persists in underrepresentation of BIPOC hired by National Parks and Public Lands.

This disruption in the legacy of enjoying the outdoors can create barriers to BIPOC looking to enjoy natural spaces. If someone's family has no history of camping, or other equipment-heavy outdoor activities, purchasing equipment can be a barrier, especially in communities of low socio-ecomonic status. Your organization may look to loan or rent out equipment needed to participate in an activity, especially for first-time participants. New participants may benefit from educational portions at the start of activities. Even activities that seem straightforward like hiking can have unwritten rules, such as "Leave no Trace" or general trail etiquette that new participants may not be aware of.

Another systemic component of what makes outdoor spaces inaccessible to BIPOC communities is the white-washing of history and land ownership. In history books and even in the naming of outdoor spaces, there has been a deliberate and intentional erasure of Indigenous history and ownership of outdoor lands.[40] This is where culturally relevant programming is important. Are the environmental stories you are telling perpetuating a white-dominat narrative about

[40] Breaking Down the Lack of Diversity in Outdoor Spaces Naomi Humphrey, National Health Foundation

the outdoors? Or are they reflective of the importance of BIPOC in the natural world throughout history?[41] For information about Black historical environmentalists, visit our blog "Snapshots in History: Black Environmentalists".

Although new laws were introduced to dismantle legal segregation there is still a perceived threat of violence from generational trauma that keeps people of color from visiting the natural world. The monstrous amount of lynchings that occurred from 1865 to 1950s usually took place in forests or natural spaces. For example, the race riots of 1919, otherwise known as the Red Summer, started because of the wrongful murder of Eugene Williams, a 17-year old Black boy who was killed for crossing into the "white section" of the waters in Lake Michigan. In 2020, we continue to see this play out both in covert ways, as we saw with Christian Cooper, a Black bird watcher in Central Park, to more overt and life-threatening ways, as we saw with Ahmaud Arbery who was fatally shot during an outdoor run. People of color who engage in outdoor activities risk being targeted, stereotyped, and harmed by others enjoying nature.[42]

The article "9 Rules for the Black Birdwatcher'' is a humorous yet cutting critique of the precautions many black people need to take when enjoying the outdoors to protect themselves. From March 19, 2020 to February 28th, 2021 there were nearly 3,800 incidents reported to the Stop AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) Hate reporting center, ranging from verbal harassment to physical assault to civil rights violations. 9.8% of all incidents reported took place in public parks, the third most common sites of discrimmination (businesses accounted for 35.4% of incidents, and public streets 25.3%).[43]

Even when BIPOC enjoying the outdoors are not perceived as a threat, differing attitudes of how to interact with and enjoy nature can lead to discrimination. A study found that "talking to new/varied people" was a greater motivator for Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans to participate in outdoor activities, compared to whites. One way to encourage this benefit in the programs your organization provides is to create space for conversations to take place. If the activity provided does not allow for much conversation, consider hosting a post-activity meal for participants to connect. If there is a desire for multi-generational programming from the community, activities can be adapted to include participants of all age levels, and then programs should be advertised as such.

Another study on Latino Environmental Perceptions and Uses of Outdoor Recreation Areas in Pennsylvania, Latino recreationists were reported to prefer activities such as picnicking, hanging out, relaxing, and taking children to a playground. Fishing was also popular, but backpacking, camping, and hunting, (common outdoor recreation activities for whites) were seldom mentioned.[44] If spaces and activities prioritize solitude in nature, and discourage these practices, people of color looking to enjoy the outdoors in these ways will not feel welcome into open spaces. Additions to park space like larger grills or moveable picnic tables can accommodate larger groups looking for social connection in outdoor spaces. Cultural events and festivals can also be hosted in natural areas, attracting attendees that may not have ventured to nature otherwise.[45,46,47]

---

41 Black Folks and Nature Todd Whitney KALW San Francisco Local Public Radio
42 The Nature Gap Jenny Rowland-Shea et. al Center for American Progress
43 Stop AAPI Hate National Report, Russell Jeung Ph.D., Aggie Yellow Horse, Ph.D., Tara Popovic, Richard Lim
44 Latino Environmental Perceptions and Uses of Outdoor Recreation Areas: Community and Natural Resources in Pennsylvania Jason S. Gordon The Pennsylvania State University Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
45 5 Ways to Build a More Racially Inclusive Hiking Community David Robles, Melanin Base Camp
46 5 Ways to Make the Outdoors More Inclusive: An Action Plan for Change, The Atlantic
47 The Melanin Base Camp Guide to Outdoor Allyship Danielle Williams, Melanin Base Camp

BIPOC Identity-Based Groups

- Melanin Base Camp
- Outdoor Afro
- Latino Outdoors
- Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and The Outdoors (HECHO)
- GreenLatinos
- Indigenous Women Hike
- Brown People Camping
- Color Outside
- Color the Trails
- Climbers of Color
- The Brown Ascenders
- All Mountain Brothers
- Black Girls Do Bike
- Native Women's Wilderness
- Greening Youth Foundation
- LatinX Hikers
- Brown Folks Fishing
- The Black Outdoors
- Black Girls Hike NY
- Diversity Outdoors
- Blackpackers
- Green Muslims
- Outdoor Asian
- Native Women Running
- Sending in Color
- Pedal to the People

Bilingual

As of 2013, 61.1 million individuals in the United States spoke a language other than English at home, and 25.1 million are considered LEP - Limited English Proficient. Limited English Proficient refers to anyone above the age of 5 who reports speaking English less than "very well". The LEP population represents 8% of the total U.S population.[48] Organizations working in areas with a high LEP population may understand the importance of providing materials in languages other than English. However, they may not have staff that speak languages other than English and may have difficulty when LEP folks who accessed the materials contact them with more follow up questions. If your staff is working to engage a community with a high amount of LEP, it is important for both written and verbal communication to be translated or available in their native language. When looking for community input, bi- or multilingual speakers may speak English proficiently, but may not have the same level of proficiency when reading or writing. For example, if you are conducting a verbal and written survey, provide different language options in the written format even if the person you are conversing with seems comfortable speaking English.

Audit what materials have been translated into another language. Are you only translating signs of rules and regulations outlining proper behavior while interpretive signage used to identify plants and other natural aspects, are only in English? This sends the message that non-English speakers are likely to break rules, but they do not deserve to access the same information about the natural space they are in.[49]

If you are looking to host bilingual events and programs it is not enough to simply hold the event as you usually would and just offer it in a different language. Like the recommendations in the section above (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) the program offerings should be culturally relevant, as well as taking into account lifestyles and the socioeconomic status of the targeted community being engaged. As noted in one article from the National Audubon Society, participants may not have the historical knowledge about the history of your organization, or may not be interested specifically in your organization's focus (in the case of the Audubon example: birds). Allow your organization to create a platform for

[48] The Limited English Proficient Population in the United States in 2013 Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, Migration Policy Institute

[49] Latino Environmental Perceptions and Uses of Outdoor Recreation Areas: Community and Natural Resources in Pennsylvania Jason S. Gordon The Pennsylvania State University Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

non-English speakers to connect with nature and wildlife in their own way. Listen to their stories and how their experiences may differ from many others who participate in your programming.[50]

Disability

One note to start: this section switches between "identity first" and "person-first" language in accordance with the APA style guide. Identity-first language is used throughout the subsection focused on Autism, in accordance with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network's guidelines.[51] While person-first language had been the preferred choice, in recent years the disability community has been shifting towards identity-first language as a part of disability pride. The switch to identity-first language is an attempt to destigmatize disability and accurately acknowledge a significant part of their identity.[52] The preference for identity-first or person-first differs within communities and areas; your organization should take time to learn what your local disability communities prefer.

Organizations with public facilities are likely well acquainted with the standards outlined in the American with Disabilities Act, that works to make public spaces accessible to people with disabilities. Above ensuring that your facilities are accessible, your organization should also take the time to evaluate your programmatic offerings to see if they meet the same standards. As discussed in the Conference Planning section, disability is a wide umbrella encompassing many different groups with different associated needs. Many of the recommendations in that section can also be applied to programmatic offerings, and this section will provide more direct examples associated with programming. If your organization is looking to engage a specific community within the disabled community at large, it is best to meet with those in that group as well as community groups based upon that disability to better understand their specific needs, and to do so before major planning has begun to ensure their needs are incorporated from the beginning.

Enjoying the outdoors is something that should be celebrated by disabled and able-bodied people alike. A study by the USDA surveyed the able-bodied and people with mobility impairments on their participation of 35 different outdoor activities. No significant differences were seen in the participation of viewing wildlife, viewing fish, visiting nature centers, bird watching, camping, sledding, backpacking, and canoeing. While this demonstrates a clear interest in participating in outdoor recreation activities from those with mobility impairments, the people surveyed with mobility disabilities were significantly more likely to identify constraints to their participation in outdoor activities. Some constraints to enjoying these outdoor activities were personal health, inadequate transportation, inadequate facilities, poorly maintained areas, and lack of assistance for their mobility condition. Another common barrier discussed in the study was social expectations, self-perception, and social fears. If people with disabilities perceive a culture that discourages certain activities for being suitable for them, they are less likely to feel comfortable participating.

People with mobility disabilities benefit from clear and detailed explanations of the surrounding areas of nature preserves. These explanations should be easily available on your website, and public-facing staff should be able to answer questions concerning accessibility in person or over the phone as well. Disabled people can have differing levels of mobility on different days, or may have different accessibility needs beyond wheelchair accessible or not. With detailed descriptions of your site, disabled people can consider their own needs when deciding if the trail is right for them, rather than just a blanket "wheelchair accessible" or no indication at all on your website. The website https://disabledhikers.com/ provides such detailed explanations for trails around the country, and your organization can utilize the descriptions used by this website on your own. DisabledHikers describes trails in the following ways:

[50] Want to Make the Outdoors for Everyone? We Have Tips on How to Do That. Khanh (Kay) Nguyen, Audubon
[51] Identity First Language Lydia Brown, Autistic Self Advocacy Network
[52] Person-First and Identity-First Language Choices Erin Hawley, National Aging & Disability Transport Center

- Getting to the trail- Describing the road conditions (type of roadway, how curvy or narrow it is), amenities around the trail (accessible restrooms, water, picnic areas, number of accessible parking spaces), public transportation options, if there is cell service on the trail
- Trail Conditions- The slope, width, and surface of the trail (including areas that are prone to mud, wind, or slipping hazards), barriers such as downed trees, stairs, boardwalks, or bridges, as well as places to rest (benches, tables, elevated rocks or logs)
- Elevation- Elevation information for the entire trail as well as overall elevation change, as well as slope, incline, and particularly steep areas.
- Segments and Trailheads- If trails are broken into segments that can be traveled individually specific information for each segment is provided
- Difficulty- While each person perceives difficulty differently the website utilizes a Spoon Rating, based on "Spoon Theory", that can help provide context for difficulty levels.

National Audubon Society has a similar project in their Birdability Survey. This information can be used in aiding descriptions on your own website, and you also can add your center to their nation-wide list of accessible birding sites.

Alongside these descriptions, your organization may also provide equipment that can be rented by or loaned to those with mobility disabilities. These can include trail or beach wheelchairs, or wheelchair accessible kayaks.

If your organization has a nature center or something similar that is open to the public, you may consider how your location can become more sensory friendly. Sensory-friendly practices are often based on making spaces more accessible for autisitc people, but they can also benefit people with PTSD, ADHD, and dementia, among others. If your organization is looking to become sensory-friendly, start by learning what disability rights organizations suggest. Whenever possible, prioritize finding your information from self-advocacy organizations, rather than organizations made up of able-bodied individuals speaking on behalf of disabled people. You can also visit institutions and programs that have incorporated the recommended methods into their work to see how your organization could do so as well. Many museums are engaged in this practice, and some venues within the watershed include the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, NJ, and Franklin Institute and Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. If you are looking for examples in your area, searching "sensory friendly activities in [your area]" is a good place to start. Many of these organizations take steps such as:

- Holding specific "sensory-friendly" hours for visitors
- Explaining tour routes and activities in detail, using both written and verbal instructions
- Taking groups to areas with clear visual boundaries
- Decreasing visuals that can lead to overstimulation (i.e. flashing lights, loud noises)
- Identifying quiet spaces where attendees can go if they are overwhelmed
- Allowing visitors to bring their own objects to decrease anxiety, as well as their own food to allow for specialized diets
- Sharing details about the venue and program on the website to prepare visitors ahead of time
- Providing sensory bags that can be loaned out. These can include noise-canceling headphones, fidget toys, weighted blankets, and more. Many different organizations outline what they include in sensory bags on their websites. Take time to research what others are doing and what your organization could include.[53,54]

---

[53] Guidelines for Autism-Friendly Programs Museum Arts Culture Access Consortium
[54] How Museums are Becoming More Sensory-Friendly for Those With Autism Aditi Shrikant, Smithsonian Magazine

Disability Identity-Based Groups

- Disabled Hikers
- Move United
- Outdoors for All
- Able Outdoors

LGBTQ+

With an estimated 8.8 million people, and 20% of people ages 18-24, identifying as LGBTQ+ in the United States, further including this community in outdoor access and in our work will strengthen our environmental efforts now and in the future.[55]

Many LGBTQ+ individuals are highly engaged with outdoor recreation and environmental concerns. As seen in the North American Camping Report, same sex couples are eight times more likely to engage in camping when compared to the United States overall. A Harris Poll found that 55% of LGBTQ+ adults self-report as caring a lot about green issues, 48% consider the environment when shopping, 45% highly value a political candidate's stance on environmental issues, and 40% encourage others to be more environmentally friendly.

Even with this connection to nature and the positive health benefits associated with doing so, LGBTQ+ individuals are three times more likely to experience major depression or generalized anxiety. This is a result of "minority stress," a term used to describe chronic stress levels that come from being a part of a marginalized group. For LGBTQ+ individuals, this stress can come from social stigma, discrimination, harassment, denial of rights, or family rejection, among many others. LGBTQ+ individuals may also face health disparities and have higher rates of other psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and physical ailments. Therefore, the positive role that the outdoors plays in overall health and wellness is especially critical for LGBTQ+ individuals.

If your organization is looking to engage the local LGBTQ+ community, you may consider facility improvements to create a more inclusive site. Gender neutral or unisex bathrooms are important for individuals who may be uncomfortable using gendered restrooms. This also benefits parents of children with a different gender than their own. Interpretive signs may be updated to include non-heteronormative images of families or groups, if they currently have heteronormative images.

Gender-neutral and sexuality-neutral interactions are also a good practice to instill in staff. As discussed in the Internal Toolkit, you cannot tell someone's gender, pronouns, or sexuality just by looking at them or knowing their name. For example, rather than saying "How can I help you, sir?" ask "How can I help you?".[56] Simple changes like this can create a more welcoming environment overall. For more information on pronoun usage and LGBTQ+ inclusive language you can visit our "Welcoming Gender and Sexuality in the Workplace'' section in the Internal Toolkit.

You may also consider organizing events catered specifically to LGBTQ+ individuals to ensure a comfortable outdoor recreation or work environment with others in the community. Several organizations, including those listed below, already successfully offer identity-based outdoor opportunities for the LGBTQ+ community.

---

[55] LGBTQ Culture and Life in the U.S. University of Wisconsin-Madison
[56] LGBTQ Inclusion in Parks and Recreation National Recreation and Parks Association

LGBTQ+ Identity-Based Groups

- Venture Out Project
- Queer Nature
- OUTThere Adventures
- Pride Outside

DEIJ in Rural Areas

The US Census Bureau defines Urban Areas places with 50,000 or more people, and Urban Clusters as any place incorporated with more than 2,500 individuals but less than 50,000. Rural areas are then defined as any population, housing, or territory NOT in an urban area or cluster.[57] Rural areas make up roughly 97% of America's land mass, and are home to a significant portion of the country's vital natural resources.[58]

It is a misconception that DEIJ only is relevant in urban and suburban areas, though the approach may look different in rural areas. The mapping exercises explained in the "Mapping for Engagement'' section of this toolkit are essential to find information about the surrounding area's demographics. Rural communities are often seen as homogeneous, but increasingly more and more BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrants, and disabled people all call rural areas home. One in ten African Americans live in a non metro area, 20% of growing rural areas owe their growth to immigrants, 15-20% of LBGTQ+ people live in rural areas, and the disability rate in rural America is higher than the overall population.[59] If you are working in a rural area take time to investigate the surrounding demographics to check if your perception of the community matches the data.

Simply living in a rural area does not guarantee access to nature. The surrounding land may be privately owned, or the only way to get to a local park or trail could be walking alongside a county road with no sidewalk.[60] Especially for low-income and geographically isolated homes, access to nature is critical for keeping people active and healthy. One study interviewed rural mothers at or below 185% of the federal poverty level to determine how they promote the health of themselves and their families. Nearly every mother interviewed indicated that spending time in nature participating in family-based nature activities was something they did to promote the health of each of their family members.[61] This access to nature is especially important as the prevalence of obesity among adults in rural areas is increasing for males and females, and whites and blacks who are not Latinx, and across all age categories.[62]

Predominately white conservative rural areas may be wary of the phrasing Environmental Justice, thinking that it is a partisan term that only applies to BIPOC. The term may also bring up polarization between jobs and the environment. Communications about environmental justice may need to be tailored for specific rural audiences, focusing instead on messaging that is value and solution oriented, rooted in local stories and places. Utilizing the language that rural people use to describe themselves when introducing concepts of environmental justice, like framing issues as rural jobs and

---

[57] Urban and Rural, United States Census Bureau
[58] Redefining Rural America Olugbenga Ajilore and Zoe Willingham, Center for American Progress
[59] Redefining Rural America Olugbenga Ajilore and Zoe Willingham, Center for American Progress
[60] Rural, low-income moms rely on nature activities for family health but don't always have access, Science Daily
[61] Rural, low-income mothers' use of family-based nature activities to promote family health, Journal of Leisure Research, Oswalk Izenstark et. al.
[62] Environmental Health in Rural America, Institute of Medicine

connections to the land is recommended. Concentrating only on talking points about the issues with resource extraction can make the rural community defensive, as some may rely on resource extraction for their livelihoods.[63] Figuring out the best language to use when approaching issues of environmental justice and DEIJ are important for organizations who work with communities that may not be open to these ideas. It is entirely possible to implement the practices and values of DEIJ without expressly stating you are doing so, much in the same way many environmental organizations spoke about the impacts of climate change without using the phrase in communities closed off to the concept.

Environmental justice in rural areas is often messaged as economic justice. Isolated rural low-wealth communities, with limited organizational capacity and influence over factors that impact their well-being, often do not have the same political power as those living in more densely populated areas. All of the following are environmental justice challenges that rural communities face that allow for economic justice messaging:

- Environmental and health impacts from extraction and utilization of natural resources
- Climate change increasing flood, drought, and fire occurrences
- Rising costs of energy
- Lack of ownership (and thus benefits) from natural resources and land management decisions
- Access to sustainable natural resource based economic opportunities[64]

Transparency and accountability are important when engaging new communities. If there has been historic distrust with the local rural community and your environmental organization, acknowledging that when making connections is important to have the community feel heard. This process, again like all engagement processes, takes time and potential repetition to build meaningful relationships. Building trust is especially important when the primary economic driver of a community is extraction based. If this is the case for the community your organization is engaging, it is important to acknowledge that extraction of natural resources is critical to the local economy and to our everyday lives. You may instead choose issues that are not in direct opposition to the extraction industry, or may message your support of different industries as supporting the local economy rather than replacing the current system. When a community is in this position is it easy for members to become disenfranchised. Going against a company, even when it is causing harm to the environment or public health, can be seen as a betrayal to the community that relies on it for economic security.

One popular alternative to resource extraction is the outdoor recreation sector. In 2018 the US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis released a report stating that outdoor recreation contributed 2.2% to the GDP in 2016, supporting 4.6 million jobs. The growth of the outdoor recreation sector was slightly greater than the US economy as a whole.[65] Outdoor recreation organizations and businesses can create local empowerment and employment opportunities, which can be attractive to communities that are reliant on non-local companies as the primary economic driver. Smaller, more locally-focused recreation businesses can lead to more direct benefits for the local community.

Estimated figures of the economic benefits of the Delaware River Basin can be found in the paper "Economic Value of Nature and Ecosystems in the Delaware River Basin"[66]. Some notable findings include the following:

- The Delaware Basin is estimated to support 600,000 jobs (both direct and indirect) with ~$10 Billion in wages in the coastal, farm, ecotourism, water/wastewater, ports, and recreation industries.

---

[63] Rural Environmental Justice: Health Environments, Shared Decision-Making, and Sustainable Communities National Rural Assembly
[64] Rural Environmental Justice: Health Environments, Shared Decision-Making, and Sustainable Communities National Rural Assembly
[65] The Outdoor Recreation Economy and Public Lands, Resources, Margaret A. Walls
[66] Economic Value of Nature and Ecosystems in the Delaware River Basin, Gerald J. Kauffman, University of Delaware Water Resources Center

- Direct jobs account for 240,621 people, and $4.9 billion in wages. Broken down for each state: Delaware, 15,737 jobs, $340 million in wages; New Jersey, 62,349 jobs, $1.3 billion in wages; New York, 32,171 jobs, $550 million in wages; Pennsylvania, 130,364 jobs, 2.8 billion in wages.
- The annual economic value of recreation in the basin is 1.2 billion. Along the upper Delaware Riverand the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area river recreation output is ~$41 million (in 2010 dollars).
- Total visitor spending in the Del. Water Gap NRA and Upper Delaware Wild and Scenic River is estimated to be $160 million, providing $61 million in wages for 2,198 jobs.
- The annual value of fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing ($1.5 billion) was scaled for each basin state to estimate $134 million for Delaware, $574 million for New Jersey, $160 million in New York, and $608 million in Pennsylvania.
- In the Upper Delaware Region (East and West branch, Catskills) wild trout fishing contributed over $29 million, providing $3.6 million dollars in wages for 350 jobs.
- In the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, 9 ski resorts provide 1,753 direct jobs, aggregating annual revenues of $87.7 million from 1.9 million skier visits.

In the Delaware Basin many, but not all, of our rural areas are in close proximity to major urban centers. If your organization engages tourists or visitors from outside your immediate community, take time to determine where your visitors are coming from and how you can work to make spaces inclusive for those who are traveling to your location. Finding the balance between supporting your local community and visitors may be difficult at first. Make sure to have multiple avenues for feedback available for the various groups and to prioritize solutions that are built upon compromise and consensus, even if it is more time intensive to do so.

Community-Centric Fundraising

Much of this toolkit is focused on implementing the values of DEIJ in programming and engagement, especially in regards to working with marginalized communities. This work is often what comes up first in peoples' minds as they think about how to integrate DEIJ into their organization's practices. While a more holistic approach to integrating DEIJ appears when this toolkit is read in tandem with the First Volume, which focuses on internal practices, this work is incomplete without evaluating how organizations are financially able to function, and reflecting on the implications of where our money comes from. Financial and budgetary constraints are ever-present for nonprofit organizations, that is something that is widely agreed upon. As your organization works to increase aspects of DEIJ in its work, fundraising is within the intersection of internal and external work. Organizations can often be hesitant when it comes to changing their fundraising model, as it has kept the organization functioning for as many years as it has existed. If fundraising is evaluated with a DEIJ lens, it often asks the questions, "What strategies can be used to get diverse communities to donate?", "How can we get a more diverse development staff?", etc. These questions rarely take into account the presence of the wealth gap in this country, impacts of systemic oppression, and how fundraising principles can build the power and voice of marginalized communities. These ideals are lauded when thinking about cultural competency and programmatic offerings, but seem harder to discuss when financial health comes into play. As with the rest of this toolkit, making changes to become more equitable takes time and is an evolutionary process rather than flipping a switch. Many of the issues and solutions with donor-centric fundraising outlined below are not something that can be addressed immediately. Instead, this section can provide a space to reflect upon the impact of donor-centric practices and provide alternative approaches that can be utilized concurrently, especially as your organization works with a more diverse (and often underserved) constituency.

Donor-centric fundraising is the practice of focusing on delivering donors' needs, making them feel good about their giving, under the assumption that doing so will lead them to give more over a longer period of time. This focus on the donor is an evolution from past practices that focused heavily on statistics or organizational objectives, and many found that that approach failed to inspire donors. Oftentimes this approach felt transactional, moving from single gift to single gift without building relationships with donors. Thus, the focus shifted to how the donor's contribution made identifiable benefits, and prioritized long-standing relationships rather than one-off gifts. Currently, donor-centric fundraising often prioritizes major donors, and in an effort to maintain relationships can lead to donors directing how services should be used as is best for them but may not be best for the beneficiaries of the funding. This is not true in every organization's case, but the model can allow for it to happen.

Community-centric fundraising, coming out of the Pacific Northwest in the last few years, has a handful of critiques for the donor-centered model. It claims that the practice of donor-centric fundraising:

- Perpetuates white saviorism. Due to the economic wealth gap in our country most major donors are white, highly educated, and of retirement age. By focusing on the donor and what their contribution allowed the organization to achieve, the donors oftentimes do not have to reckon with the role that systemic inequality has played in their life. Major donors are not benefiting from their donations simply because it feels good, or because they are saviors to groups that have no impacts on their lives. Rather, donors benefit from creating a stronger community around them.
- Prohibits honest conversations with donors and short-changes donors out of having authentic relationships with nonprofits and those they serve. If donor's wishes are being prioritized due to their wealth, that can feed into the assumption that those experiencing challenges in marginalized communities do not know what solutions would benefit them most, simply on the basis that they do not have enough wealth to dictate how funds should be used. When donors are treated as outside experts the voices of those most impacted by injustice are diminished. Those impacted by injustice are "others to be helped", rather than agents of change in and of themselves. It also alienates donors from the communities they are funding, that those they are helping are drastically different from themselves rather than being united and each person's empowerment is intertwined.
- Fuels systemic injustices. By prioritizing major donors, their desires are often those that are met, on the virtue that they are funding the work. Putting donors in the center and appealing to their emotions can leave less time and energy to develop an understanding of systemic injustice that they may be contributing to. This understanding is critical, especially when your organization is working with communities that are negatively impacted by these injustices, and that your organization is attempting to address.
- Encourages inter-competitiveness between non-profits. With only so many high-level donors to contribute to organizations, nonprofits can be pitted against one another to secure these major donors. Organizations have to spend more time courting donors with more and more elaborate engagement techniques, rather than focusing on the work of the organization's mission. This issue is exacerbated when it comes to competing with non-profits of vastly different resources than your own. A larger nonprofit can have the dedicated staff following principles of donor-centrism such as hand-written thank you cards shortly after a donation, while a smaller organization without a dedicated staff member or department may not have the capacity for a follow up for weeks. This is not because the smaller organizations do not care about their donors, but because their limited staff capacity is prioritized to furthering their core operational functions.
- Reinforces money as the default measure of one's worth. Even when organizations espouse that they value every contribution equally, it is easy to fall into the trap of valuing the most money. Think about how many organizations define major donors as those who give above a certain level, rather than what a donor's personal context is when donating. This perpetuates the notion that those who have more money deserve special treatment, getting their name written on program agendas, individualized thank yous, etc. when proportionally someone donating $25 may have been a larger gift than a person donating thousands.[67,68]

[67] How donor-centrism perpetuates inequity, and why we must move toward community-centric fundraising Vu Le, NonprofitAF
[68] The donor-centred baby and the community-centric bathwater Ian MacQuillin, Rogare The Fundraising Think Tank

Community Centric Fundraising provides alternative approaches that can be used within a donor-centric framework to address some of their criticisms. They are as follows:

- Developing a more collaborative nonprofit sector. This principle does not allow a scarcity mindset to drive decisions relating to other organizations. Collaboration with other nonprofits is strongly encouraged, and this can come in the form of partnerships, introducing donors to other nonprofits, sharing grant opportunities and funder relationships, crediting other nonprofits publicly, support one another during fundraising events, and sharing resources, ideas, and approaches to fundraising and other mission areas. Fundraising practices that perpetuate the "tragedy of the commons" in which one organization benefits while negatively affecting others in the sector are to be avoided. Organizations should be thoughtful about what grants they apply for, and may instead choose to pass on grant opportunities to smaller organizations that do critical work while being under-funded. Reflection on the organization's work in a particular community is performed regularly, to ensure that it is still relevant and responsive to community needs. If it is not, the work must be adjusted, or even step away in order to not create a negative presence.
- Ground fundraising in Racial Equity and Social Justice. Fundraising professionals should be educated on aspects of DEIJ, and how those ideas impact the work that they do. Donors should also be encouraged to think about their roles and privileges with these topics. Larger organizations should consider their roles in perpetuating inequality, especially those made up of dominant groups, especially when they absorb the majority of funding and then filter that money through their organization to reach smaller nonprofits.
- Elements other than financial donation are valued and appreciated. Staff, board, volunteers, and the communities served are just as important and impactful as donors in many ways, and the same work being done to show appreciation to donors must be done to thank these groups. Those who can contribute time, talent, or connections to communities are just as appreciated as monetary donors.
- Donors are treated as partners in the work. Donors should be encouraged to understand the complexity of the work being done by organizations. This means that organizations should push back if donors recommend things that go against the needs of the community. When communicating with donors, organizations need to be clear about the resource needs that it takes to comply with donors' wants, and push back when their asks become excessive. If donors wishes are diametrically opposed to the needs of the community being served, their wishes should not be adhered to.
- Fostering a sense of belonging in the work, and that all parties benefit from it. When members of a community are being asked to share their stories for fundraising campaigns we should be aware of the impact that can have on them, especially if their stories can lead into feelings of tokenizing. If community members are being involved in fundraising efforts the partnership should be authentic and the community's wishes respected. The donor is part of the community that does the work, not simply someone who funds it. The donor is not put on a pedestal for their contributions, thus othering them from the community being served. Rather donors are encouraged to see how they benefit from the work they are donating towards. This can look like moving away from "Your $1,000 paid for 5 children to attend summer camp", but towards "Your $1,000 combined with the funding from grants and other donors, along with support from volunteers and staff, helped us serve 500 children this summer". This also assists donors in seeing the work being done holistically, as well as incorporating the importance of donations on overhead and indirect expenses.[69]

As stated in the opening of this section, this is not a denunciation of donor-centric fundraising, rather an outline of ways to increase equity and focus the needs of communities served while interacting with donors. Especially as this is a rather new approach to fundraising, if you are interested in learning more we recommend you look through the cited articles

[69] 9 Principles of Community-Centric Fundraising Vu Le, NonprofitAF

for more detailed information and take the time as an organization to determine how donor-centric fundraising is benefiting your work, and how it can be improved upon to be more equitable.

Additional Resources

CDRW Links

- CDRW DEIJ Toolkit Volume 1: Internal Organizational Practices
- CDRW DEIJ Member Resource Library
- CDRW DEIJ Homepage (includes blogs, instructions on joining DEIJ Workgroup, and links to everything above)
- CDRW Youtube Account (DEIJ Fall Webinar Series, DEIJ Forum Sessions)C

List of Trainings, Workshops, and Conferences

- Taking Nature Black
- PGM ONE Summit
- Naturally Latinos
- Black Sustainability Summit
- Latinx and the Environment Summit
- National Environmental Justice Conference
- Women in the Environment Conference
- Women in Conservation Leadership Conference
- White Privilege Conference
- Facing Race
- People's Institute for Survival and Beyond

Where to Send Aid to Indiginous Populations

(shared by artists Edgar Heap of Birds and Douglas Miles in a program hosted by the Rubin Foundation)

- Navajo Nation COVID-19 Fund at http://www.nndoh.org/donate.html You can also contact the Health Command Operations Center Donation Branch at 928-871-6206 or general@nndoj.org.
- The Navajo Department of Health's COVID-19 website at http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19 and the Navajo Health Command Operations Center at 928-871-7014.
- Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund at https://www.gofundme.com/f/NHFC19Relief
- Food Baskets for Elderly on Navajo Nation-Covid19, Chinle, Ariz. https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-elderly-on-navajo-nation
- Northern Diné COVID-19 Relief Effort at www.gofundme.com/f/northern-dine-covid19-relief-effort
- Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health at https://secure.jhu.edu/form/jhsphamerin
- Bill Richardson Covid-19 Navajo Families Relief Fund at www.nmchildren.org.
- NB3 Foundation COVID 19 Response Fund at https://www.classy.org/give/92644/#!/donation/checkout